



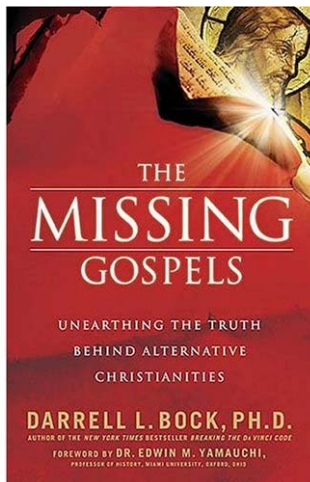
Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities Darrell L. Bock,

Unless you have been living on another planet for the past few years, you have no doubt heard claims that the traditional understanding of Christianity and its early history are false and need to be revised. Several revisionist scholars have alleged that early in the history of the Church, there was no single entity called "Christianity." Rather, there were several different "Christianities." Some of these were Gnostic groups, and others were later to be called "Orthodox." In the view of these revisionist scholars, the "Orthodox" basically outmaneuvered the "Gnostics" politically. Then they gave themselves the name "Orthodox," called those who disagreed with them "heretics," and then suppressed them. This what Bart Ehrman, Elaine Pagels, and others tell to the media, which is eager to promote these theories in order to pressure modern-day Christianity to conform more to the relativistic spirit of the age. It is also in the background of books like *The Da Vinci Code* and the recent media frenzy over the Gospel of Judas.

Unfortunately, most Christians do not know enough about Gnostic teachings, writings, and the background history of the movement to be able to assess these



claims. Some, as a result, are very disturbed by them. Furthermore, many believers are also unfamiliar with other traditional writings by Orthodox believers in the early centuries of the Christian faith, and how they compare with the New Testament and with the Gnostic writings.

The Missing Gospels equips us to understand these issues. Bock lays out the evidence in a fair manner. He provides a basic introduction and analysis of revisionist scholarship and its flaws. He also discusses the major views of the origins of Gnosticism and argues that it arose after Christianity was established in the 1st century. He provides a very helpful introduction to some of the Gnostic texts, where they came from, and when they were probably written.

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Of the Heart and Mind

Finding Biblical Perspective on Health and Wealth

This is a topic that has gotten much attention in the world today, particularly for us in the marketplace ministry. Traditionalist, who grew up with stories of Hudson Taylor and George Muller, see suffering and barely making ends meet as equating to piety and devotion. Of course, there is great joy of witnessing God providence when we see no other means, when Jehovah Jireh comes to the 'rescue'.

The other is the assumption that God's blessing is tied to availability of health and wealth. This comes in the form that some would say to a suffering patient, like the friends of Job, that there are only two possibilities; either one lacks faith or one harbours sin in their life.

This week I was challenged by 2 biblical paradigms which has further clarified my own understanding.

It was an afternoon where I was having coffee with a pastor friend. He runs a ministry with no fixed salary. For the past 30 years, he knows not where the next paycheck will come from. It is a testimony of faithfulness which blows the modern mind. Through his ministry, hundreds of thousands come to hear the gospel through the distribution of tapes and CDs in their own language. From remote places like Bhutan and Nepal, with the use of a hand operated, cardboard

player to urban cities like Tokyo. Here we find the traditional model of Hudson's Taylor famous quote, 'God's Work done in God's Way will not lack God's Supply'. I fully subscribe to that. This is applied also in our own MCN ministry where we do not raise funds but quietly seek God's providence. We also run with almost zero overhead being a ministry of volunteers with no staff.

But again, here is the question that we have to ask ourselves. What makes it less of God's providence and us less thankful that Jehovah Jireh provides our needs through a paid job and blinds us from giving thanks to our Father with the same intensity as my good pastor friend? Both proceeds from the same hand of God.

The other model, which is NOT health and wealth gospel but rather within a business community context, that wealth is generated and sought not as an end or seen as a result of a blessing but as the growing of kingdom resources. In other words, health and wealth are inconsequential as a result to gauge if God is blessing or not but rather to judge hearts in accordance to the intention and the process by which biblical values are lived out.



Unfortunately, many testimonies in healing sessions or marketplace testimonies, portrays only the 'success' stories. Storyline usually goes something like this: *Business was going down and I was using my own strength. When I committed the business to the Lord, I made more profit than I ever imagined.* Praise the Lord when this happens. But here is the catch: How would one wisely use the profit? Blessings always comes with responsibilities. But we also need to balance out the picture.

Much less is said about one who lost his business because he did not succumb to bribery, lost one's job because she did not compromise her principles, or despite committing to the Lord, business still made a loss. How then should the Christian respond? If it was done by faith, a clear conscience and glory to God, then it should also be, "Praise be to God". Is it normal to struggle to come to terms with this reality? Absolutely. Because we cannot deny both our humanity and desire to honour God

But Seek first the Kingdom...
By Timothy Liu

Google Plus

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GRN

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Recordings
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Telling the Story
of Jesus in every
language

Global Recordings Network (GRN)

www.globalrecordings.net

Many Singaporeans travel throughout much of Asia and beyond to work. I meet many friends at the airport lounges. As Christians develop friendships and working relationships with fellow co-workers in other countries, at times, they are also interested in questions relating to our faith. Sometimes we struggle to put the gospel in a manner that they understand as many of them are not particularly fluent in the English language. We would like to pass

them a CD or something to listen to in their own language. Where can we find help?

Gospel Recordings Singapore is a ministry providing tapes and resources, as the name indicates, recordings of the gospel message primarily for non-believers. Gospel Recordings Singapore is part of GRN network.

At this site, probably the most useful feature is the ability for us to download messages, put them onto a CD or MP3 and pass them on.

To date, GRN has a recording of 5669 languages and

dialects, with many more of messages. Obviously not all is available online but you can search for messages either by country or languages. In addition, there are also scripts for short stories on evangelism that have been made culturally sensitive, bible stories and Sunday School materials.

This is a treasure chest of resources that has been built over the years. If you requires further assistance on the selection of recordings or require hardcopy tapes or CDs, please contact the Director; Rev David Lim or send e-mails to grsin@singnet.com.sg.

Eyes in a Darkened Room

A Good Year

Max Skinner (Russell Crowe) is a big time trader in London. Orphaned at an early age, his uncle Henry Skinner (Albert Finney) has taken care of him. Max spends many memorable summers at Henry's vineyard homestead in France. When Henry died, Max was left with the estate. He then travels back to the 'chataeu', and finds himself mesmerized by the memory. He also ran into Fanny (Marion Cotillard), a café owner whom he falls in love with.

Taking much from the



analogy of wine making, the story tells of lessons to be learnt of life. It is a story about finding oneself and living passionately in life. It is similar to parables of Jesus, who uses stories relating to wine, vines etc to illustrate les-

sons in life.

Living in urban Singapore can be overwhelmingly routine. There are times when we need to get out of our 'comfort zone' to discover who we are or what we have become. Though we hear God and live out His purposes in the hustle and bustle of life, we also need the 'Sabbath' rest where we retreat in relative silence to reflect, to be refreshed and even re-directed. You may be pleasantly or horrifyingly surprise what you find and what you hear God tells you.

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Kingdom Building at the Workplace

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Then he compares the Scriptural teachings and the traditional Christian writings to the Gnostic materials regarding four major subjects: (1) the nature of God and creation; (2) Jesus' nature—divine and/or human? (3) Redemption—spiritual only or also physical? (4) Jesus' death—knowledge, sin, and salvation. Bock summarizes these texts, but also lets

them speak for themselves by quoting them at length. This fascinating book demonstrates that the heirs of Jesus' teaching and the OT were the Orthodox—while the Gnostics were rightly rejected since they were proclaiming a different Jesus, and a different Gospel.

By Brian Thomas