

Contact: Ben Laurro, Pure Publicity
818.753.4056 or Ben@purepublicity.com

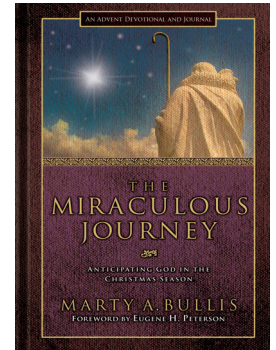
“Advent is not an argument that God exists. It is an immersion in song and story and celebration that God comes—to us!” Author and pastor Eugene Peterson

Preparing for the Real Meaning of Christmas

Author and philosopher revives the Christmas season with a fresh rediscovery of the celebration of Advent

Los Angeles, Calif — Advent (Latin for “coming” or “arrival”) is the four week Christian celebration of the entrance of Jesus into the world that culminates on Christmas Day. In 2007, Advent begins on December 2 and marks the beginning of the new Christian Church year. During these four weeks Christians reflect upon the stories relating to Jesus’ birth and childhood in order to stimulate and energize their faith.

Christmas is a “busy” time for most people, where the world seems in constant motion. The birth of Christ too often becomes a secondary issue amidst the busyness. This need not be so, for Christ understands the type of frenetic world in which we live. “Christ entered the world in motion: traveling to visit Elizabeth while in Mary’s womb, journeying to Bethlehem to be born, visiting Jerusalem with His parents weeks after His stable birth, and fleeing to Egypt to avoid King Herod’s wrath. His early days and months were as harried as any modern life could offer. Yet this child, this Word-made-flesh, brought stability into a tumultuous world,” writes **Marty Bullis**, a former minister and the author of *The Miraculous Journey: Anticipating God in the Christmas Season* (Regal Books), a book that takes readers on a spiritual journey through the Advent season.



Bullis leads the reader through all four Gospel accounts of Christ’s Advent. *The Miraculous Journey* contains 29 daily Scripture readings for the Advent season, followed by thought-provoking reflections, bidding prayers, and pages for journal entries. The four weeks are structured as follows:

- The First Week of Advent: The Gospel of Matthew
- The Second Week of Advent: The Gospel of Mark
- The Third Week of Advent: The Gospel of Luke
- The Fourth Week of Advent: The Gospel of John

Bullis makes Advent accessible and more meaningful for Christians of all denominations, liturgical and non-liturgical. The devotional is well suited for individual and group use; it contains helps for structuring small groups as well as candle-lighting meditations for use in church and home.

Eugene Peterson has called the reflective seasons of the church “time-gifts.” Advent is one such “time-gift” during which the Christian reflects upon the coming of Jesus into our dying world. It is for life that this divine-coming was provided—the life of human beings redeemed through the work of Christ. Advent is, then, a time for rebirth.

As Bullis writes, “Advent causes us to become children again. It is a celebration of birth, a celebration of all that the Christ child shows us about being human. We remember the words of Scripture: ‘no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above’ (John 3:3, *NRSV*) and ‘unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 18:3, *NRSV*). Advent calls us back to childhood, back to birth, back to the womb. When we find ourselves as God’s children, reborn into a Kingdom of hope, we find our legs again, and find ourselves joy-jumping.”

Marty A. Bullis is a fresh, provocative voice in Christian literature and the author of *The Passionate Journey*. A graduate of Milligan College and Claremont Graduate University, he is a former minister and has taught philosophy and religion at a number of colleges, including Azusa Pacific University and Juniata College. Marty and his wife, the Reverend Tracie Bullis, reside in central Pennsylvania with their two children.

About *The Miraculous Journey*:

The Miraculous Journey: Anticipating God in the Christmas Season by Marty A. Bullis. Published by Regal Books. October 2007. Hardcover, 128 pages. \$14.99. ISBN: 978.08307.42783. 5.25 x 7.25.

Suggested Interview Questions

For Marty Bullis, author of *The Miraculous Journey*

1. What is the Advent season? What is sacred about Advent? When does it begin?
2. Has Advent become a forgotten or overlooked celebration? How can we recapture the essence of Advent?
3. What are some traditions people celebrate during Advent?
4. What are the four elements to each devotional in *The Miraculous Journey*?
5. Do most churches typically have Advent traditions, or have they been lost over time? How does *The Miraculous Journey* appeal to churches across denominational and traditional lines?
6. You write that the busy American Christmas season is often full of consumerism, where the celebration of Christ's birth becomes second order. How can Christians and churches refocus the Christmas season back to its original purpose?
7. How does the Advent season point to people's opportunity of rebirth?
8. How do the four Gospels differ in the story of Jesus' birth and early years? Why?
9. How do our own spiritual lives and conversions mirror the story of Jesus' birth?
10. What was the family tree of Jesus like? Was it perfect? How does this point to redemption in our own lives and families?
11. How does the Holy Family fleeing for Egypt symbolize the protection of the family today? What lessons can we learn from that?
12. Why does the Gospel of Mark bypass Jesus' early years? How are the Gospel accounts different concerning the birth and youth of Christ?
13. You write that we're often overcome with fear in our daily lives. How does the repetition of the phrase "fear not" in the Gospels impact our fears?
14. In the Jesus story, the child inside Elizabeth "leaped in her womb" when Mary and Joseph arrived. How does Advent challenge us to embrace a "childlike faith"?
15. What should be the main focus of our spiritual lives as we enter Advent?

For an interview with Marty Bullis, contact Ben Laurro at Pure Publicity at 818.753.4056 or Ben@purepublicity.com.

###