



Senior Moments Book Review



ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD IN THE WORLD'S GREAT ART

The Three Marys

I Was Wrong by Jim Bakker

When the and shortcomings of several prominent television evangelists began to surface in the 1980s, no one's fall was as meteoric or as public as that of Jim Bakker, the host of the immensely popular PTL show and head of Heritage USA located in Charlotte, NC.

I doubt that any minister in church history has paid a higher price for his lifestyle than Jim Bakker did. Not only did he end up spending nearly five years in federal prison, but he also faced widespread criticism and ridicule for his opulence while building his ministry at Heritage USA.

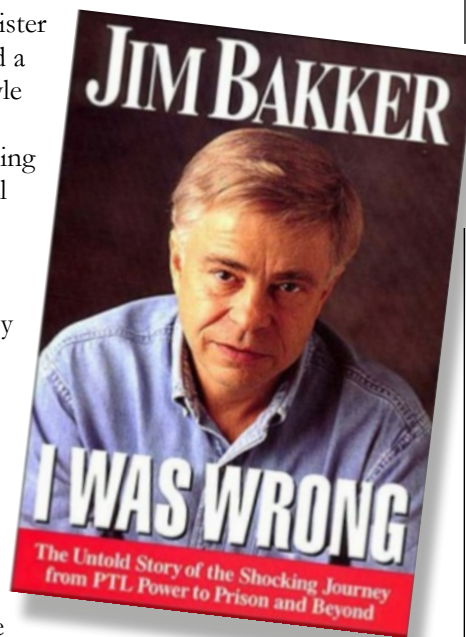
He and Tammy Faye had found wealth and instant fame with their upbeat message of health and prosperity. But in 1987 the principles he had preached were sorely tested, and he descended into an accelerating spiral in which he lost bit by bit everything he had. In 1989, Jim was sentenced to forty-five years in prison—a virtual life sentence for a forty-nine-year old man. This much is known.

But what has never before been recounted is Bakker's own story of anguish, despair, grace, and repentance. And in his deepest need, he discovered that the upbeat slogans and pat solutions that he had so successfully offered on television were useless to sustain him through shame and grief.

Inmate Bakker, #07407-058, one-time confidant to presidents, had hit bottom, but in prison he found fellowship with a different sort of God—one who could identify with poverty and pain. Bakker was compelled to embrace the whole of God's message that brought deep intimacy with Him.

Today, the theme of Jim's message is God's mercy, love, and grace. He admonishes people to love God and to love their neighbor as themselves, and that the Bible teaches the fulfillment of Christ's teaching is to bear one another's burdens. Everywhere Jim and Lori Bakker go, they are lifting up hurting people and telling them, "If God can restore us, He will do the same for you. We serve a God of the second chance."

Jim Bakker was wrong about many things. Exactly what they were and how he came to confess them will surprise and inspire you. This is his story.



COMPILED BY BRUCE MENZIES

Have you ever noticed that the Resurrection itself is never described in the gospels? There was no one there so *see* it. Instead, the evangelists tell us how Jesus' resurrection was *discovered*. Why were the women at the tomb?

In the ancient world it was women, usually family members, who washed a corpse and laid the body out for burial. In this case, the task was given to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome (also called Mary of Salome). They had cared for him in life, and now they would care for him in death.

Notice the painter has omitted the tomb, the discarded shroud, even the risen Christ, allowing the viewer to focus on the emotional impact of Jesus' absence on their faces. The wall of the city of Jerusalem is just barely visible in the background and the light of dawn is just appearing. The women are shocked and amazed. What has happened?

The answer came swiftly. In the place where the women expected to find Jesus' body, there were instead one (Luke says two) beings whom the gospels call "angels," dressed in the white garments associated with heavenly beings. But Tanner doesn't show the angel. Besides, how to you see an angel? You see him in the wonder and joy on the women's faces, the radiant light illuminating their clothes and hands.

Something in their experience of this moment convinced the women that not only was Jesus not there, which they could plainly see, but that he had undergone some transformative experience that meant he was alive, even though they had known him to be truly dead. If they wanted to see him (which of course they did) they should look for him not in Jerusalem, but in the rural villages of Galilee where he came from. There, away from the sophisticated city of Jerusalem, they would find him. And finally, they should tell others about this—especially the disciples and Peter. Peter would later gain comfort from the fact that, despite his earlier denial, Jesus singled him out as a key figure to be told.

Image from Wikiart



"The Three Marys" (1910) • Henry Ossawa Tanner
Carl Van Vechten Gallery of Fine Arts, Nashville, TN

About the Artist

Henry Ossawa Tanner (June 21, 1859 – May 25, 1937) was an African-American artist. He was the first African-American painter to gain international acclaim. He moved to Paris in 1891 to study, and decided to stay there, being readily accepted in French artistic circles.

Tanner's body of work is not limited to one specific approach to painting. His works vary from meticulous attention to detail in some paintings to loose, expressive brushstrokes in others. Often both methods are employed simultaneously. The combination of these two techniques makes for a masterful balance of skillful precision and powerful expression.

Tanner's "Sand Dunes at Sunset, Atlantic City" (c. 1885 oil on canvas) hangs in the Green Room at the White House; it is the first painting by an African-American artist to be purchased (during the Clinton administration) for the permanent collection of the White House.

In his later years, Tanner was a symbol of hope and inspiration for African-American leaders and young black artists, many of whom visited him in Paris. On May 25, 1937, Tanner died in his sleep at his home in Paris. There was still wet paint on his canvases.

