



The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach

Elaine A. Heath

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Elaine Heath argues that the church is in a dark night of the soul. It has thus lost its prophetic voice--its effectiveness in proclaiming the good news of redemption. Rather than resisting or decrying this state of affairs, the church, says Heath, ought to embrace its situation as a starting point to renew its vitality and consequently, its witness. A solution is proposed in the wisdom and contemplative spirituality of the great saints and mystics--people such as Julian of Norwich, Ignatius of Loyola, Phoebe Palmer, Henri Nouwen, and others.

This book brings fresh insights to the theory and practice of evangelism by examining it through the lens of the classic threefold path of purgation, illumination, and union. Different ways of thinking about evangelism are drawn from the lives and teachings of the mystics, and different ways of practicing evangelism are then proposed via narrative theology. The result is a holistic perspective, offering a corrective to programmatic and consumeristic forms of evangelism so prevalent today. Here is a unique contribution to the discussion on evangelism in our postmodern world.

"A refreshing and profound contribution. With perceptive insight, Heath identifies issues facing the contemporary church in the West. She then responds to those issues with care and creativity, skillfully recovering the richness of Christian mysticism and its themes of holiness. Not many projects ably bridge the distance that can emerge between the study of evangelism and its practice in communities of faith--Heath's does."--**Lacey Warner**, Duke University Divinity School

"Elaine Heath is not afraid to name our demons and release our angels! She shows courage, honesty, and direction for the future in this very readable book. All Christian denominations are sharing common problems today and have a common future--a mystic future or none at all."--**Richard Rohr, OFM**, Center for Action and Contemplation, Albuquerque, New Mexico

"Here's my hunch: for many readers, this will be the most important book they read this year."--**Brian McLaren** (brianmclaren.net), author/activist

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