

**INSPIRATIONAL MYSTERY  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR  
RANDY ALCORN**

**THE LONG TOMORROW:  
At Heaven's Open Portal  
by Janet Chester Bly  
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We do well to think of the long tomorrow.  
A. W. Tozer

August 2007  
Janet:

To those who ask me about the challenges of writing, I learned long ago that I should never wait for inspiration or a good beginning. I just jump right in. I'll either cut it out or clean it up later. Years ago I heard someone say "Never edit at the point of conception." The best writing comes in revision, not creation—but you must have something to revise. I think a lot of writer's block happens when people wait for the right words. I just write. Later, I labor over the right words, and there's no block because I'm already looking at something on the screen.

For me, the toughest part about being a writer is working on the big books, the ones that take a couple of years. In my research for *Heaven* I read over a hundred and fifty books on Heaven, most of them long out of print. I did this over a three year period, and of course, the more you research, the more you have to handle, and the more you have to cut. If you do five or six revisions, as I usually do, it's easy to lose sight of the end. I had some very discouraging times where I stayed up half the night and asked, "Lord, is this going to make a difference? Is it worth it?"

It's really something you have to accept by faith, trusting that a measurable result will come, even if the book isn't read by people for another two years. Perseverance is essential in writing...especially on larger projects. I sometimes get stretched to the brink. (And that's good, because it takes me to my knees—apart from Him we can do nothing.)

The payoff comes when the book is published and I receive feedback like these three letters:

I have been contemplating for months how to end my life. Then this morning I was reading Chapter 25 in *In Light of Eternity* and it hit me like God himself was talking. You wrote, "There's something important I need to add here. As long as God keeps you on earth, it's where he wants you..."

Thank you for those words.

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You may not remember me, but about 4 years ago you saw me reading a Bible in the Chicago airport on your way home from a conference. You stopped and gave me a copy of your book, *Safely Home*. I read it and a couple years later wrote you an email telling you how it impacted my life.

Well, now I am writing you again and telling you that Father used your book to begin and grow a passion and love for China in my heart. Now I am an English teacher at a university in China. Without saying much more you can guess what else Father has given me: the chance to share with hundreds of locals who have never heard the good news. I just thought that I'd let you know how Father used your book in my life and how He has led me to a team in China sharing and spreading His story.

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Our helicopter pilot son was shot down in Iraq 2-27-91. He had sent us a letter to be opened only if he did not come back.

"Well, if you have to open this up, please don't worry about me. For once I know something you don't, what Heaven's like."

His words have traveled far—giving millions a hope for Heaven. I have been collecting "heaven" books all these years. Thanks for the best book of all about heaven, your book **Heaven**.

Sometimes we get to see the impact of my writing firsthand. One night after Nanci and I were leaving the theatre, Nanci noticed a man leaning on a walker, struggling in the wind and rain. I got out to help him to his car. He seemed exhausted, so I asked if I could drive him home.

He declined, but I insisted we follow him so I could help get him into his apartment. He pulled out, swerving through the parking lot. We prayed he wouldn't make it to the street. God answered that prayer when he accidentally ended up in the drive-through line at Jack in the Box. That allowed me to get into his car, so I could drive him home, Nanci following.

When we reached his place, we talked. George had been a political science professor at San Francisco State University. Shelves full of books by Karl Marx (who was not one of the Marx brothers, by the way) made it safe to assume George wasn't a great fan of your average Bible-believing Christian. But he wondered why we'd helped him, what was our angle. I told him it was because we're followers of Christ. Jesus said to love people, and it was a privilege to help him out, no big deal.

I left George my book ***In Light of Eternity***, and I prayed God would touch his life. We figured maybe we'd hear the rest of the story in eternity, but in George's case, we didn't have to wait that long.

Three months later my ministry assistant, Kathy, woke up with a medical problem she'd never had before and hasn't had since. She went to her doctor, whom she hadn't seen in a year. She brought him ***In Light of Eternity***. When he saw it he said, "One of my patients was carrying that same book. He said he wished he could talk with the author."

The doctor wrote down George's phone number. I called and went to see him. He was full of questions about Jesus Christ and grace and forgiveness. We talked for several hours. I saw God's Spirit at work. George prayed, confessed his sin and gave his life to Christ. He's hardly missed a Sunday service since.

When you experience such things, God's graciously saying "Yes, all the work you put into writing really is worth it."

Randy Alcorn  
Gresham, Oregon

**Perseverance is essential in writing...especially on larger projects.  
I sometimes get stretched to the brink.  
(And that's good, because it takes me to my knees—apart from Him we can do nothing.)**

## THE GIVE-AWAY GOSPEL GUY

He has planted eternity in men's heart and mind.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

If you sit next to him on a plane or visit with him any length at a conference or on a street corner, you're liable to get a free Alcorn book. I know that more than half the books of his on my shelves, he personally offered to me *gratis*. My views on morals and money, possessions and purity, have been influenced by this author's apologetics input.

He's a slight man, with a huge impact. A kind face, friendly eyes, but intense about what he perceives as truth. He's gracious—he respects another's right to disagree. Above all, he lives and breathes an eternal perspective on every detail of life.

The Amplified Bible describes the phenomenon of eternity as "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy." Randy Alcorn's the epitome of one human banking his every resource on that premise.

One of his character's finally 'got it' from the vantage of heaven:

'I feel as if I were an artist, Zyor, and I painted my self-portrait, which was my life. At death I stepped off the canvas, and now for the first time I can see it, the whole picture. I can see it not as I saw it then, but as Elyon saw it. I don't like everything I see, but I can now see it as it truly was.' Zyor nodded his approval, as if this was the whole point—to see through God's eyes, the eyes of eternity.

From *Deadline*, p.141

Like every author, Alcorn writes from a specific worldview—an aspect from which he experiences and judges the world around him. How he perceives moral choices. How he determines truth. Everything's from the paradigm of a spiritual context and connect. Every writer has opinions about how the world works. Prejudices about likes and dislikes. A very personal perspective. Randy Alcorn's immersed into the Christian paradigm. He lives and breathes, he writes, he speaks, he frames every atom of his being and doing in the light of eternity.

He's not afraid to tackle the big problems and complex beliefs of our age. The ones the reader may ignore. Or minimize as important. Ever and always Alcorn forces his listeners and readers to consider every aspect of life from the eternal vista, that is, in light of the absolute, infinite commands of an Almighty being.

But there's inevitable conflicts, cranky controversies when you believe you hold the truth.

From *Deadline*, p.41:

Then there was the other side of Finney, the troubling, infuriating side. His self-assured manner about his beliefs. His clearly defined concept of right and wrong that sent such a judgmental message.

Meanwhile, Alcorn's not personally raking in big bucks from his bestsellers. Royalties from his books are the property of Eternal Perspective Ministries (<http://www.epm.org/>). These funds spread to many other Christian ministries all over the world. For instance, every penny of profit from *Safely Home*, goes to the persecuted church in China.

Buying an Alcorn book is an investment in multitudes of needy people's lives.

In an interview with ChristianBook.com, Alcorn stated:

I want to be remembered as one of God's grateful errand boys. I want my life and my writing to have

said, 'It's all about Jesus, not about me.' I won't leave behind much of an inheritance to my children and grandchildren, but I hope my wife Nanci and I leave a deep and abiding heritage.

I'm sure that Finney's prayer in *Deadline* (p.221) surely is Alcorn's own: "God, help me to live this life as I should, to use this brief window of opportunity to make a difference for eternity. I give you all that I am and all that I have, my money, my possessions, my life, even my family. . . Help me Lord, to invest my life in what will matter forever."

### WHY FANS LOVE RANDY ALCORN

*Deadline* is for clear thinkers who enjoy a good argument.  
Frank Peretti, bestselling author of *This Present Darkness*

Alcorn's fans tend to be educated, intelligent. They're principled debaters. Alcorn's novels attract thinking readers whose minds may have "stagnated, become cluttered with trivia and politically correct buzz-words that substitute for thought" (*Deadline*, p.412)—those who want the refreshment of a stretched insight.

While some of his nonfiction is in a popular, pocket or purse-sized format, his novels tend to be epic-sized mysteries, 400-600 pages. Serious readers only need apply. His novels may take longer to get through, but Alcorn's readers don't mind. In fact, it's a plus. It prolongs the mind-blowing experience.

If I were going to be stranded on a desert island and only allowed to bring one fiction novel with me, this would be the one. I have never read any other fictional novel that can touch it. At least not one written in the past fifteen years.

Dan Blankenship, review of *Deadline*

But who is Randy Alcorn the novelist? *Deadline*, his first novel, stayed on the bestseller's list for thirty-six months. So, what's his appeal?

One reviewer, a novelist himself, gives some clues.

Imagine Sherlock Holmes, Nero Wolfe, Jack Bauer, and C. S. Lewis gathering in the same room to write a mystery, and you'll have an inkling of the fun Alcorn had in writing (*Deception*). Alcorn does a great job of mixing a serpentine plot, lots of clues, and sermonettes about God's justice and involvement in the lives of men and women.

Eric Wilson

There's plenty more to applaud about this writer.

But first, an enigma.

### Fans Intrigued by Illusive Genre

It does not do (*Deadline*) justice to simply call it a murder mystery. It's hard to categorize. It could be filed under theology, social issues, spiritual warfare, evangelism, and possibly some others as well.

D. W. Bryant

Alcorn doesn't write sequels or series, as such. He writes semi-sequels, spin-offs—mostly same characters, different central protagonist. For instance, *Dominion* is considered a semi-sequel to *Deadline*. Each book stands alone, yet favorite characters carry on.

However, he presents a mixed genre that's a challenge, at times, to define, to the delight and consternation of his eclectic readers. They take it on as a challenge. Here's some of the stabs at a label . . . hard-boiled detective with Christian theme . . . spiritual Grisham-type suspense . . . Christian police procedural . . . classic crime detective . . . the thinking person's murder mystery . . . theological thriller . . . meditative mystery . . . sociological suspense . . . philosophical police procedural . . . fantasy who-dun-it. The many themes complicate pegging the style.

Alcorn has written a novel that combines the suspense of John Grisham and the theological pondering of C.S. Lewis.  
New Man Magazine, review of *Deadline*

**"Deception was as engaging to me as books by Crichton or Clancy. . .  
I'm sure glad Randy can't paint or I'd be in big trouble!"  
Ron DiCianni, award-winning artist, author of *Beyond Words***

**"Deception explored the nature of man, the deceit of evil, and the breadth of eternity.  
Not to be missed."  
Angela Hunt, author of *Uncharted***

**"Sam Spade and C.S. Lewis all rolled into one"  
Cheri Clay**

He's a thorough, detailed, methodical researcher. He's spent time in the inner city—with Portland homicide and gang detectives, in their domains and out on the streets. He's well acquainted with newspaper offices and practices through contacts at the *Oregonian*. He's a student of theology and society, with years of extensive research on the topic of heaven and social issues.

Fans enjoy Alcorn's fiction because he gets better with each novel and he avoids the fine line of preachiness by aiming to entertain, so the themes and underlying messages work. Part of this happens through his dry humor. Subtle mockery of political correctness. Trendy Chuck Norris jokes.

I love sarcasm. . . Man, did I hit the jackpot in *Deception*.  
Chances are that if you pick up a book that carries the picture of an eye surrounded by jagged glass, you wouldn't expect humor.  
I laughed out loud. . . several times. . . this novel is hilarious.  
Kelly Klepfer

Homicide detective Ollie Chandler's got a way with phrases: "Messin' with me's like wearin' cheese underwear down rat alley."

Chandler often gets called to the spotlight loving, cliché-ridden police chief's office, where he usually gets scolded . . .

"What's that smell?" He leaned down, two feet from my face.

I ran through the options: coffee, beer, smoke from Rosie O'Grady's pub, Limburger cheese on my morning muffin, Jade East, English Leather Lime. Since I hadn't worn the last two since I was a junior higher, I finally said, "My gum? Black Jack?"

"It smells terrible. And it leaves a black film on your teeth."

"That's licorice."

"I've been looking through your file," he said. "Before I took over, you were cited for 'inappropriate levity.' Do you recall why?"

"It would be hard to pinpoint."

"During Christmas season you answered your phone, 'Ho, ho, ho. . . homicide.'"

"Oh yeah."

Readers get involved and enthralled with his characters.

### **Fans Bond with Intensely Developed Characters**

-- Ollie Chandler (*Deception*)

Homicide police Detective Brilliant. Quick-witted. Exceptional deductive skills and street smarts. But he uses off-beat methods. He's a risk taker. A rule-bender. He's got a sarcastic tongue—Rex Stout (Nero Wolfe) cynical humor, "a tribute to one of Ollie's (and Alcorn's) favorite detective novelists" (Carmon of [buriedtreasurebooks.com/weblog](http://buriedtreasurebooks.com/weblog)).

Chandler's also vulnerable. He's experienced some personal tragedies--losing his wife, Sharon, and a child. He attempts to numb his pain with alcohol. His first law: "Things are often not what they appear."

Alcorn says in a ChristianBook.com interview, "When I started *Deception* I thought this would be it, no more stories centered on Ollie. But once I got inside his head, things slowly changed. I thought, I like this guy, I like his quirks, his sense of humor, the gruff exterior and the soft heart, the head-butting toughness and the vulnerability of a lifetime of hurts. So, depending on the response to *Deception* (because I'll find out whether readers really like Ollie), Lord willing, there may well be one or more other Ollie stories to come."

-- Clarence Abernathy (*Dominion*)

An Oregon newspaper columnist and suburban middle-class black. Loves his wife and devoted to extended family—his sister and her kids. Enjoys his job. Angry at injustice. Struggles with revenge when his sister is killed. Obadiah Abernathy, Clarence's father, helps develop this character, his culture and history. Obadiah played baseball in the old Negro Leagues. He talks about Hank Aaron along with Cool Papa Bell and the earth shattering homeruns of Josh Gibson. Says one reader, "I found that I wish I could have spent a morning fishing with Clarence's dad like Manny got to do."

-- Jake Woods (*Deadline*)

Columnist for a newspaper. Divorced wife Janet because he cheated on her. A liberal, award-winning, politically correct journalist. Involved in a tragic accident under suspicious circumstances, that takes the life of his two best friends—buddies since childhood, comrades in the VietNam War. Teams with detective Ollie Chandler to uncover the truth that evolves into a complex, dangerous murder investigation. Jake's plunged even deeper when he deals with the consequences of skewed perspectives of his own life and discovers it may be too late to save his daughter's.

**"Deception is the same high quality as Randy's related novels *Deadline* and *Dominion*. All three are page-turners. . ."**

**Chuck Norris, six-time World Karate champion, international film and TV star**

**"Randy Alcorn is amazing. He's one of my all-time favorite authors"**

**Karen Kingsbury, bestselling author of the *Redemption* series and the *Firstborn* series**

### **ALCORN'S GOT ISSUES**

Alcorn doesn't shy away from sizzling social and moral issues

via ***Deadline's*** characters. At times I was surprised at what he was willing to tackle. . .Alcorn steers clear of religiosity, however, by preserving (the liberal columnist's) wit, passion and humanity. Review by M. Golay Erisman

This author has his definite stands on the social ills of our day. And there's no secret about that in his nonfiction or fiction. However, he gives equal time and full development of character to those on all sides of any question or belief. His complicated evolving of story enables the reader to ascertain, assess and analyze the moral morass of our times. He weaves suspenseful stories while confronting important social dilemmas. He's not bashful to take on the big 'Why' questions either.

Why would a good God allow evil to happen over and over?

Why would God allow an innocent baby to die?

Why is my saint of a mom's mind crippled while a demented murderer thrives?

Why does God wait so long to bring justice?

Is there really such a thing as truth? In a world supposedly created by chance, how can there truly be any such thing as right and wrong?

This writer-with-a-mission's characters often declare a war of words. Many of them seem pent up inside with a drive to debate. Like a blown balloon about to burst, they let off steam. Dan Blakenship calls ***Deadline*** "the perfect novel" as it "manages to cover almost every subject one can think of concerning the human struggle—sex, homosexuality, abortion, marriage, infidelity, life, death, racism, politics, dating, murder, and religion."

**"The length of *Dominion* (600 plus pages) and exhaustive treatment of various theological and social issues requires a committed reader. A rich read"**  
Amazon reviewer

**"Randy Alcorn has hit it out of the park. *Deadline* is riveting. Motivating. Intriguing. Provocative. And it's for the mystery lovers too. Many books feed the mind. Some feed the heart. *Deadline* nourishes both."**  
Stu Weber, author of *Tender Warrior*

### **Fan Connect: Crusades with Impact**

In the novel ***Safely Home***, Alcorn confronts the persecuted China underground church—the martyrdom, suppression and imprisonment of Christians in modern day China. Readers come away with resolve to do whatever they can. "A day will not go by," says Carol Dammen, ChristianBook.com reviewer, "that I don't pray for the Church in China and the state of the Church in America."

***Safely Home*** made me think deeply about my commitment to my faith and what price I would be willing to pay for it. . .a great story of faith and friendship in very difficult circumstances.

Michelle, ChristianBook.com reviewer

Alcorn's novels influence, affirm or alter thinking people's perceptions. He provides clarity on confusing subjects. He offers purpose through the drudge and sludge of hope killing deceptions. His readers debate and consider along with the characters. One of the most frequent comments: "Makes you think differently about eternity."

It could make you angry if you disagree, applaud if you do agree, and simply think differently if you're somewhere in between.

M. Golay Erisman, review of ***Deadline***

**"Randy Alcorn writes fiction with more lessons than a month of Sunday sermons. . .  
He doesn't retreat from the tough questions, he faces them with wisdom and courage.  
He refuses to whitewash the skin issue. . ."**  
**Eric Wilson, novelist**

### **Fans React As He Takes On The World**

From abortion to the VietNam War . . .

But with some distinctive slants.

For instance, he highlights how many *men* have been affected by the aftermath of abortion. When they regret their own pressure applied in the decision. When they're left out of the choice. When they realize how the act altered their relationship with the expectant mother and sometimes with all women. In *Deadline* there's a gut-wrenching group counseling session with guys angry with doctors, society, and themselves. And suffering a type of post-traumatic stress disorder. That could lead to violence.

Alcorn deals with every aspect of a male's relationships. He gets into the heads of characters with conflicted friendships, because of their differing posture on things. In *Deadline*, Doc, Finney, and Jake enjoy a tight threesome, but on crucial matters they disagree.

Their polarized beliefs and philosophies seemed like matter and anti-matter—two contradictory world views inevitably hostile, explosively hostile, to each other. No matter how great the explosion and how far it threw them from each other, something always brought them back together. And always Jake was there, right in the middle.

This same Jake later agonizes at one point over his long dead marriage, in the aftermath of a crisis with his daughter, Carly.

As he sat on a couch that had once been his, seeing the crushed remains of a wife who had once been his, and hearing through a closed door the hot bitter sobs of a daughter who had once been his, he realized in a moment of breathtaking clarity that everything he had told himself to justify the divorce, no the desertion, had been a lie. All of it. He doubted the realization would last, but here and now it was self-evident.

In *Deadline*, the reader submerges into the center of the conservative-liberal clash, with liberalism presented in both its new and old interpretation. On pp. 260-263, Cornelius Leonard, a long-time journalist of the old-school, rants with his former student, columnist Jake Woods:

You know what it used to mean to be liberal? It meant to be open-minded, to not buy into the status quo just because it's the status quo. Well now, guess what? We're the status quo! . . . Fairness used to be our goal. But now we decide in advance which side deserves to be treated fair. . . It's censorship with a Capital C.

Characters cover every facet of media bias--whether it exists, to what degree, and how much it matters.

But the discussions really get down and chilling when the topic turns to medical ethics. Moral relativism penetrates every level, even the very definition of death. With a pretense of

death in order to harvest a patient's organs. Such as those with minimal hope of recovery. Some may be mostly not alive, but not all dead.

From ***Deadline***, p.274:

We call them HBCDs—heart-beating cadaver donors. That's why brain death is such a convenient standard. We can still live by the dead donor rule.

All kinds of considerations determine priorities for patients, such as people waiting for an organ transplant. Or wondering when to pull the plug.

***Deadline***, p.273:

Try chairing an ethics committee when the people on it have no shared foundation for ethics. Everybody's got their own sense of what's right and wrong. If one of the doctors on the committee saw a made-for-TV movie on euthanasia last night, it might be the primary influence on his input to the committee today. So you've got some Hollywood screenwriter and producer setting the ethical direction of Lifeline Medical Center.

And there's much exposure of the subtle and not-so-subtle latent racial prejudice that plays out even in professional circles.

From ***Dominion***, p.321:

"You know Jake, if you ever get dog-tired at the *Trib*, you can put your head down on your desk and snooze a few minutes. I've seen you do it. I can't do that."

"Why not?"

"Because when you do it, you're just a man taking a snooze, probably because you stayed up late working hard. If I did it, I'd be a black man—lazy, indolent, probably up late partying or taking drugs. Cheating my employer by stealing his time. Proving black men are as bad as everyone thinks."

"Come on, Clabern, you're overreacting. Nobody would think that."

". . . Dr. King used to tell the story of a man walking past ten drunk men, nine of them white, the other black. The man shook his head and said, 'Just look at that black drunk, now would you?'"

As an African-American. . . I applaud Alcorn for raising the racial issues without excusing African-American Christians on their need to forgive (a point I thought he did not soften!).

Amazon review

Alcorn offers in ***Dominion*** his take on the only true hope for racial reconciliation. His portrayal of black journalist Clarence Abernathy is so convincing, many readers are amazed to look at the photo at the back of the book and realize the author's Caucasian.

**Alcorn has the 'uncanny ability to pull aside the veil of the spiritual world and reveal what is happening. . .'**  
**Dolores Clark, ChristianBook.com reviewer**

## TRI-LEVEL STORIES

"I value all things by the price they shall gain in eternity"

John Wesley

A unique feature of a Randy Alcorn novel is that they're set someplace like Portland, Oregon, or China, but also simultaneously in heaven and hell. A God's view peek at life before and after death in one fell swoop.

### Earth As Shadowland

Only those touched by the world of substance  
could truly find joy in the world of shadows.

From *Dominion*, p.326

An Alcorn mystery novel illuminates how what's done in the land of nitrogen and oxygen impacts life beyond death. Earth-bound characters battle spiritual warfare.

In *The Ishbane Conspiracy* (co-authored with daughters, Karina and Angela), dark spiritual forces target four college student friends for destruction: Jillian, a struggling Christian; Brittany, a pretty girl in with the wrong crowd and dissatisfied; Ian, a drinker, interested in witchcraft and girls, but also afraid; Rob, a happy, moral guy, but he's hiding something. A mix of Frank Peretti and C.S. Lewis.

In *Lord Foulgrin's Letters*, Lord Foulgrin and his demon cohorts attempt to deceive and destroy Jordan Fletcher and his family. Similar to C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters*, but set in modern times.

Each of these characters face the classic, formidable battle between good and evil.

In Alcorn's stories, humanity's gift of life is seen as a one-chance offer to choose where to spend eternity. Guardian angels aid their assigned people in sundry ways on earth and accompany them on their passageway to heaven. Through tragedy, characters question their tidy assumptions on life and the universe and try to find meaning in a shifting morass of values. They face unsavory discoveries about themselves. They reap the consequences of their choices. False philosophies founder in crisis. They sweat and strain for victory over dark forces vying for dominion over them.

From *Deadline*, p.89:

"Your friend is like every man," Zyor said. "all that is within him cries for certainty, for purpose, and for truth. For life eternal. Yet all that his world offers him is uncertainty, purposelessness, deception.

**"(Alcorn) fills the pages with enough tension to cause ulcers"  
Bookstore Journal for *Dominion***

### Hell As Sulfur and Acid

Doc was overwhelmed with the horror of it all. Doctor Gregory Lowell had wanted a world where no one else was in charge, where no order was forced upon him. He had finally gotten it. He missed the sound of laughter. . .The awful realization descended on him that there was no storyline here. No opening scene, no developing plot, no climax, no resolution. No character development. No travel, no movement. Only constant nothingness, going nowhere. This was Doc's first day in hell.

From *Deadline*, p.344

Alcorn paints the black, utter despair. Hell as the natural, rightful place for the defiant, an existence that's chosen by free will, when heaven and God's rule is refused. *Lord Foulgrin's Letters* is "like placing a bugging device in hell's war room, where we overhear our enemies assessing our weaknesses and strategizing attack."

He cried out for the rocks to fall upon him, to obliterate him.

But there were no rocks here. There was nothing here. Nothing familiar. Nothing comforting. Nothing at all. Here there was no opportunity to kill, no opportunity to die, no one to dare or boast to, no one to jive or hustle or con or steal from, no one to seduce,

no one to tell stories to, no loved one to embrace. He no longer had dominion.

From *Dominion*, p.558

### Heaven As A Billion Burning Quasars of Joy

Finney could now see many excited images at the far edge, some reaching in toward him. The other, his mysterious companion, now marched ahead of him. . . Finney moved more slowly, more tentatively, like his first time on water skis. This was the first time he'd ever died.

From *Deadline*, p.48

Alcorn's heaven is . . .

"a bright, vibrant, and physical New Earth, free from sin, suffering, and death, and brimming with Christ's presence, wondrous natural beauty, and the richness of human culture as God intended it"

"the spectacular new universe that awaits us"

"a place without fear, anger, sadness, or sickness"

"full of great stuff: beauty, joy, fun, lots of activity, and rest when you need it"

Alcorn's description of heaven is the juxtaposition of the temporal and eternal. It's delightful, refreshing, glorious rapture. But he makes it plain that heaven's not our 'default destination'—specific preparation required.

According to Alcorn, in heaven . . .

**1.)** Learning, growth in understanding continues. Through all eternity knowledge of God continues, as well as insights to self. Heaven's an ongoing process.

The angel Zyor explains to Finney (*Deadline*, p.141):

"No man dies finished. Your first duty here is not to forget your life on earth but to understand it. You must milk it for all its meaning. Lessons not learned there must be learned now. . . Sin is gone, your mind is pure, but your understanding is not complete."

**2.)** There's incredible freedom when loosed from preoccupation with one's self—the trap of selfishness. The drive to hold dominion over our space, our resources, our possibilities, our people.

From *Deadline*, p.99:

He was intoxicated not by mere feelings of joy, but by joy itself, a billion burning quasars of pure joy. All joy he had known on earth was like drinking from the partially contaminated lower waters, far from the source of the stream. Now he was drinking from the Source itself, the very fountain-head of Joy.

**3.)** Everyone worships the One who has dominion over all. The air's thick with the glory of God.

Many readers appreciate reading Alcorn's nonfiction *Heaven* book, along with his fiction. And he is quick to exhort anyone to study the Bible for correction or affirmation of his "baptized imagination." Here's his disclaimer:

As to those events and dialogues in the afterlife, it should go without saying that these are fiction! I believe God expects us to recognize the limits and flaws of our imaginations, but to utilize them nonetheless. It is of paramount importance that the reader's mind and imagination be submitted to the Word of God as its sole and final authority. This novel lays no claim

whatsoever to divine revelation.

Alcorn's motivations in writing his fiction are many . . . to challenge the reader's perspective of life after death . . . to charge us to make the most of life on earth . . . to address secret doubts and concerns regarding God and His ways . . . to expand the vision, to demonstrate how amazing and forever fascinating heaven could be--a realm of endless discovery and wonder. . . how close it is to us all . . . and above everything to appraise daily hassles and ventures from an eternal perspective.

#####THE END#####

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Before starting EPM in 1990, Randy co-pastored Good Shepherd Community Church for thirteen years and has taught on the part-time faculties of Western Seminary and Multnomah Bible College in Portland, Oregon. The Alcorns live in Gresham, Oregon. They have two married daughters and four grandsons. Enjoy Randy's blog at [www.randyalcorn.blogspot.com](http://www.randyalcorn.blogspot.com).

**Janet Chester Bly** has authored eleven books, such as *Awakening Your Sense of Wonder* and *Hope Lives Here*. In addition, she has co-authored eighteen books with her husband, award-winning western author, Stephen Bly, including *The Hidden West Series* and *The Carson City Chronicles*. Check her out at [www.BlyBooks.com](http://www.BlyBooks.com)