

Book of the Month

July 2010

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church.
N. T. Wright. Harper Collins Publishers. New York. 2008.

Many of us in the evangelical church were taught to evangelize our neighbors by asking the question, "If you died tonight, do you know where you would spend eternity?" Of course, in asking the question, we assumed that *we* knew what happened after death. It turns out, we may not know our Bibles as well as we thought we did. In his recent book *Surprised by Hope*, N. T. Wright helps to expose some of our confusion about the future and sends us back to the Bible to revisit our most basic assumptions about heaven, the resurrection and the mission of the church. He reminds us that what we think about life after death has profound implications for how we practice life before death.

God's plan for the future is much greater than "saving souls" in the sweet by and by. He intends to renew the whole creation. And the most amazing part of this project is that the work has already begun! Filled with insights from both the Bible and church history, Wright examines such doctrines as the Second Coming, purgatory, the Last Judgment, the ascension and hell. But this is not just a book of doctrinal abstractions. It will challenge your views on such practical matters as cremation, how we do funerals, and personal evangelism.

Surprised by Hope reminds us of three great realities that have often been neglected by the evangelical church. 1) Christ came to save the whole person, not just our "souls." 2) Salvation is for the present, not just the future. 3) Christ died not just to do something for us, or in us. He died to do something *through* us.

Pastor Stan Key