



To Heaven & Back Book Review

BY PAT CORWIN

Article published in the November, 1997 issue of the Western Washington Catholic Charismatic Renewal on Rita Bennett's latest book, "To Heaven & Back"

“The part I personally found rewarding was Healing Prayer (at the end of each NDE chapter in Part Two) where Rita leads the reader into a time of looking into one's own life . . . and then encourages the reader to enter into a time of healing prayer.”

Sometimes procrastination pays off. I had planned to finish reading Rita Bennett's new book, **TO HEAVEN AND BACK** before we left for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and submit this column early. However we got busy and upon our return I took Rita's book with me on the Abbot David Geraets' retreat and planned to finish the book review in time for the GLEANINGS' deadline.

Healing the inner child was the topic of the retreat and Abbot David recommended reading books on Near Death Experiences (NDE), forgiveness and relationships, particularly with mother and father. **TO HEAVEN AND BACK: True Stories of Those Who Have Made the Journey** (\$10.99) is a book about NDE. In Part One: Let It Be for Healing, the author says books on NDE can be placed in five categories based on how each genre addresses the issue of near-death experiences.

- Scientific Category
- Agnostic and Atheistic Category
- Nonreligious, Nonbiblical
Supernatural Category
- Christian Cessationist Viewpoint
- Christians Seeking God's Truth

Rita writes: "This book's main purpose is to give people hope and a glimpse of heaven. It is to comfort the bereaved and to prepare the dying for the next life. And by the 'next life,' I don't mean a different

one. It is a continuation of the same one but in a dimension outside time and into eternity, beyond anything we have known on earth. Hope for the next life helps us to live more loving lives with greater purpose now and later." (p. 28)

In Part Two: Let It Be for Love she tells the stories of believing Christians whose NDE's deepened their faith and of non-Christians who were converted through the experience.

Rita's sharing of her own experience when Dennis died and her eventual healing will give comfort to those who grieve the loss of a loved one. After each story, Rita reflects on the impact the NDE has on a person's life or others in his life. The part I personally found rewarding was the closing section [of Part Two] Healing Prayer. Rita leads the reader into a time of looking into ones own life through questions or suggestions and then encourages the reader to enter a time of healing prayer.

In Part Three: Let It Be for Ecstasy, the author probes the Scripture and gives a biblical view of heaven and the afterlife. Dr. Lester Sauvage writes in the Introduction:

"In this book, Rita Bennett takes her readers on a trip to the great beyond and back again to earthly life. She suggests that you and I stop for a moment and accept that another day we will make this trip to eternity one way. With that thought in mind, we can all profit from quiet contemplation of what Rita is telling us." (p. 13)

For more information: WWCCR Bookstore, P.O. Box 33609, Seattle, WA 98133, (206) 364-2272, or Christian Renewal Assoc. at (425) 775-2965, FAX 775-2033.