

THE AUTHORIZED LEFT BEHIND HANDBOOK)

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Written and developed in association with Tekno Books, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

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Published in association with the literary agency of Alive Communications, Inc., 7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

LaHaye, Tim F.

The authorized Left behind handbook / Tim LaHaye, Jerry B. Jenkins, with Sandi L. Swanson.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-8423-5440-9 (pbk.)

1. LaHaye, Tim F. Left behind series—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Christian fiction, American—History and criticism—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 3. Apocalyptic literature—History and criticism—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 4. Rapture (Christian eschatology)—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 5. End of the world in literature—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 6. Second Advent in literature—Handbooks, manuals, etc.

I. Jenkins, Jerry B. II. Swanson, Sandi. III. Title.

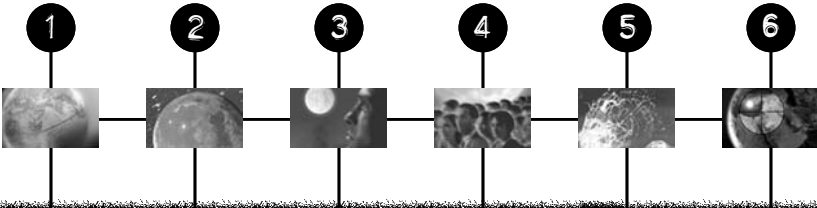
PS3562.A315L443 2005

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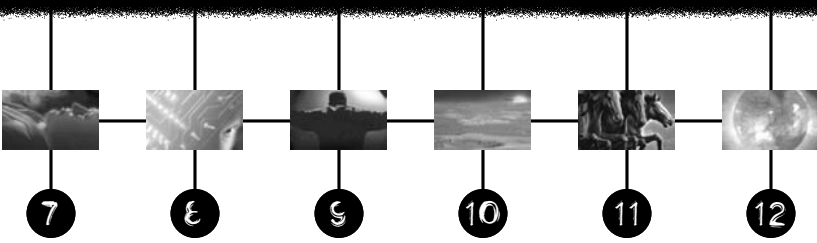
2004026540

Printed in the United States of America

09 08 07 06 05
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



BEHIND
LEFT BEHIND:
AN INSIDER'S LOOK



IT'S A PHENOMENON!

HOW *LEFT BEHIND* CHANGED THE FACE OF CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING

NEARLY 2 DECADES AGO, pastor and author Tim LaHaye was on a plane when he witnessed a pilot flirting with a flight attendant. The interplay between them caught his attention because the pilot was wearing a wedding ring. It was a passing moment of temptation, one that has undoubtedly been repeated thousands of times, but this time was special. Dr. LaHaye wondered what would happen to the pilot if the Rapture occurred at this very instant. Unknowingly, that pilot and flight attendant had just provided the trigger point for something that would revolutionize Christian publishing and Christian discourse in public and private. In fact, this tiny moment is proof that the Lord works in mysterious ways.

There's no denying that this encounter created the first tiny ripple of something that would become a tidal wave. The *Left Behind* series and its related books have sold over 62 million copies. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins have become the best-selling novelists in America, displacing writers like John Grisham and Tom Clancy along the way. The *Left Behind* books have cumulatively spent hundreds of weeks on every major best-seller list in America, including (much to everyone's surprise, at least initially) the *New York Times* list. The first print run for the hardcover edition of *Desecration* was over 2.9 million copies. That's a whole lot of books. And readers everywhere have responded with passion to the saga.

Thanks largely to the *Left Behind* novels, Christian fiction sales have quadrupled in the last decade. The number of Christian fiction titles released has doubled in the same time. The *Left Behind* series has

also inspired a highly successful line of young adult books, and young adult Christian fiction is increasing in sales and number of titles being released too. The series is published in multiple languages, so the message is getting out all across the globe. It's a new world out there for Christian fiction, a world with vibrant, exciting new stories hitting the shelves daily. And most industry experts believe that the bulk of that growth was spurred by the success of *Left Behind*.

But it isn't just about the books. It isn't even mostly about the books. The real impact of the Left Behind series is on souls. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins get many letters every day from readers who have had their relationships with Christ strengthened through reading the books. The authors also get letters from people who came to Christ because they read the books. The official Left Behind Web site gets thousands of hits every day as readers look for a place to discuss the books and get answers to the questions they raise. There's a Left Behind Prophecy Club that looks at the biblical basis for the Left Behind series, complete with interpretation by leading biblical scholars and bulletin boards for the members to discuss the issues. The whole field of end-times prophecy has been given a major boost by these books, and the discussion of the various interpretations of biblical prophecy has become more mainstream and intense since the release of the series.

And all of this is just what's occurred in the world of Christians. The Left Behind series has been exceptionally effective at taking the Word of God into high-profile, non-Christian media venues and triggering a serious discussion of Christianity in places where Christ is otherwise rarely given a passing mention. In the last decade, the Left Behind phenomenon has resulted in front-page articles in *Time* and *Newsweek* and lead articles in most of the major daily newspapers, including the *New York Times*. The books even broke into the rarified air of top-level television and radio. Stories about the books and their authors have been featured on the *Today Show*, *60 Minutes*, CNN, MSNBC, the Fox News Channel, *The Morning Show*, *Good Morning America*, and thousands of talk radio stations. Through these stories broadcast by the mass media, millions of people who have never seriously considered their need for God have been brought face-to-face with the concept of redemption through Jesus Christ. The success of the books has driven the opportunity for an unprecedented harvest of souls. By bringing the message of Christ's love to the worldwide media, the Left Behind series has spread the discussion of Christianity from church confines into the whole world. What people are talking about,

they are thinking about. And what they are thinking about might change their minds and hearts. Through the widespread discussion of the *Left Behind* books, the opportunity has been created for millions of people to seek and find God.

AUTHORS' CORNER

TALKING ABOUT LEFT BEHIND WITH TIM LAHAYE AND JERRY B. JENKINS

THE AUTHORS of the Left Behind series, Dr. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins, love to communicate with readers of their books. They've spread the books' message through the official Left Behind Web site, leftbehind.com, through personal appearances and national tours to meet their fans, and through interviews with the media. In a series of interviews for Tyndale and for this handbook, both Dr. LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins gave candid answers to many questions readers have raised about their novels.

Question: I understand, Dr. LaHaye, that you were the one who came up with the idea for this series, and you are the prophecy consultant. When and where were you when you developed this book scenario?

Tim LaHaye: On the way to speak at a prophecy conference, I watched the captain of a plane come out of his cabin and begin flirting with the head flight attendant. I noticed he had a wedding ring on and she didn't. As the sparks flew between them, I thought of a remark by one of my lifetime friends to the effect, "Wouldn't it be interesting if the Rapture occurred and the pilot recognized that the hundred people that suddenly were missing from his aircraft meant that his Christian wife and son would be missing when he got home?" That was when the title hit me; knowing his loved ones were missing, he knew before he got home that he was left behind. From that we made the pilot the hero who becomes a Tribulation believer living during what our

Lord described as “great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matthew 24:21). Though there are many prophecies concerning that time, the book of Revelation contains the most complete details of that period. So we have followed it carefully, using fictional characters of newly converted believers to fulfill the detailed events in the book of Revelation.

Jerry B. Jenkins: That really was the germ of the story. When we met that’s basically what Dr. LaHaye shared with me, and I recognized that it would be a great idea and something I wanted to be involved with. The follow-up question, the one that resulted in the whole series, is “what happens next?”

Question: When you envisioned this series, what reader audience were you targeting? Have you been surprised by its popularity?

Tim: I envisioned both Christians and unsaved souls as the primary audience. I was hoping to see Christians rededicate their lives to Christ in light of his coming and for the unsaved to receive him. And, yes, I have seen my dream of reaching half a million people multiplied over a hundred times.

Question: How did the LaHaye/Jenkins team come together?

Jerry: I was aware of Dr. LaHaye and his ministry, but I had never met him. I had even heard, probably back in the mid-eighties, that Dr. LaHaye had this idea called *Left Behind*, but I didn’t give it another thought until our mutual agent at the time introduced us back in 1992. I had signed with Rick Christian just a few months before, and I didn’t know that he represented Dr. LaHaye. Rick organized a meeting and introduced us, and we hit it off immediately. Dr. LaHaye is about the age of my mother, so there is sort of a father/son-dynamic relationship between us. I’ll never forget that day we met. After we started talking, it just seemed like the right combination of an idea person and a resource person. The whole thing just blossomed from that meeting.

Question: How did the books find a home at Tyndale?

Tim: Our agent, Rick Christian of Alive Communications, shopped *Left Behind* to about a dozen publishers, and five of them bid on it. It came down to two, and Tyndale won out. Mark Taylor of Tyndale House is the one who really saw the book’s potential.