

How I Came From rock to Rock

The Testimony of Eric Barger

Take A Stand! Ministries



How I Came...

"From Rock To Rock"

Unless otherwise specified, all Scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

How I Came From Rock To Rock

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DEDICATION

I had many opportunities to talk with my beloved grandmother before her passing at 103 years and 10 months in 2001. When my grandfather died unexpectedly in the early 1970's I was not a Christian. His death was an overwhelming shock, made worst because I didn't yet know God. When my mother passed away in 1989, I had been a Christian for over eight years, and God had given me the precious opportunity to lead my mother to the Cross of Christ just nine months before she passed away. Though her passing was agonizing and painful, God saw my grandmother and I and my family through.

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It was during that period, through our many talks and through our many tears, that I was able to discern with all certainty that indeed, my grandmother did know Jesus personally. I will be forever grateful that time and again I was able to say “thanks” to her for being there for me. To be clear, my boyhood home did not fully operate under the Christian principles that those who love and respect God should set their sights on. I have described ours as a “kind of a Christian home” but pointing out that fact is in no way a disparagement towards my grandparents. I recognize the fall of mankind and the enemy of the soul as the culprit and posthumously extend my unreserved love to the couple who loved and cared for me as their own so many years ago. It is to them that I dedicate this booklet.

Though my name appears here, this is also the story of my fantastic wife Melanie, who came to Christ before I did. I am eternally grateful to God for her Christ-like love, patient help, support, and prayers as I made the journey “From Rock to Rock.”

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My life was not unlike a lot of other kids growing up in the 50's. I was the only child of two other "only" children who met and married too young and who divorced before my recollection. Due to my mother's advanced rheumatoid arthritis, which she had contacted at age 16, we lived with her parents. When my dad and mom split up, I was extremely fortunate that my grandfather and grandmother embraced and accepted the responsibility of raising me. I reflect back now and remember my grandfather as a man of honor and principle and my grandmother as the epitome of a loving mother. I am also grateful that my earthly father and I enjoyed a rich and loving relationship until his passing in 2014.

Like most of you reading this, I was raised going to church. As a child, I attended St. Paul's Methodist Church in my hometown of Parkersburg, West Virginia. Every week I attended Sunday School. I took part in the usual activities such as church plays and camps and can still remember the various Vacation Bible Schools I attended. I was not a bad kid. I didn't cause a lot of trouble and just fit into the crowd. If you had asked me if I were a Christian, of course I would have answered "yes". I heard all the great Bible stories, learned about the Bible's characters, and had some general understanding of the Christmas and Easter stories. But to my remembrance, no one ever explained to me in a way that I understood that becoming a Christian was not a set of church activities, charity, or good works. Those things are all **proof** of one's salvation and relationship with God, but are in no way the **means** by which to be saved. Though I would have claimed to be a Christian and did all kinds of Christian things, like so many who have an unbiblical concept of Christianity, I did not possess the authentic salvation experience needed to cross the line between "lost" and "saved". I had never trusted Jesus as the Lord and

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Savior of my life, but instead had fallen into the pattern of doing church stuff. So let me be clear about what I wish someone would have communicated to me so long ago - church membership, trying to be good, and doing nice things are fine; but, like baptism, those things do not gain us admittance into God's Heaven. It is faith in Jesus Christ as our only Savior and acceptance of what He did for us on the Cross of Calvary, *and nothing else*, that can cleanse and bring us assurance of eternity in the presence of the Lord. I say this to you early in this piece, because I truly wish I would have understood this at a young age. It would have saved me from much heartache and would have radically altered the path of my life.

Early in my life, it became evident that I had musical talent. By age ten, I had begged my grandmother for a guitar and began taking lessons. I learned the songs of the day, by ear, from the records I had purchased. The Dave Clark Five, The Supremes, Jan & Dean, The Beach Boys - they were all my favorites. They taught me how to play rock n' roll guitar . . . at least through their records. In those days, the music being produced, and the lifestyle and attitude being advocated by the musicians, were vastly different from those of today. Then, the most rebellious song on the radio was Leslie Gore's "It's my Party and I'll Cry if I Want to"! It all seemed so harmless, but little did we know where the music revolution was going to take us. There were no songs glorifying drugs, the occult, murder, gangs, sexual acts, or rape. In the 1950's record companies, the media and the public at large would have shunned any group or artist who glorified Satanism or suicide in their music. They would have found no audience. Yet today, themes like this garner those responsible various esteemed artistic awards, loving accolades from large fan bases and of course, lots and lots of money.

I as first actually paid for playing music when a local disc jockey hired my band, "The Echoes", to play at an area teen dance. That was in early 1963 and I was only eleven years old. By the fall of 1964, our band was busy just about every weekend playing dances

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and parties. Getting up to go to church on Sunday morning quickly became a thing of the past. After all, how could my grandparents expect me to do that since I had been out late the night before entertaining somewhere? To say it frankly, since they had become less dedicated to church as I had grown older and since our home was at best a minimal witness for the Lord, I was allowed to slide and was not told that I had to attend church. Now don't miss this - you see, if Satan can separate a person from any sort of Christian fellowship, then he has accomplished a real coupe in their lives. He is continually working to undermine and destroy God's will and purpose for each and every life. As long as I was in church, there was always the possibility that I might have heard the gospel presented in such a way that the Holy Spirit would have convicted me. I might have turned my life over to Him before the world, the flesh and the Devil could get a paralyzing hold on me. But without any influence from Christians and only the fleeting memories of Sunday Schools from years gone by, Satan had me right where he wanted me, insuring that I would fall for his plan for my life instead of discovering what God wanted.

A major part of Hell's plan for me began to unfold on a Sunday night in February, 1964 when I first saw The Beatles. Watching their performance on the Ed Sullivan Show was a turning point for me, and probably thousands of other aspiring young musicians. I said, "That's what I want to do. I want to be a musician for life." Little did I know what that was going to mean for me.

By the time I turned sixteen, I was playing in the largest party bar at Ohio University six nights a week. I was popular and financially successful for my age. My high school English teacher even told me that I was making more money each week than she was! I grew up too fast and I was growing up without godly guidance, having elected to follow the morals and lifestyle of my musical heroes. In short order, I had thrown off the upbringing that my grandparents had tried to give me, exchanging it for sexual experiences, drugs, and the rock n' roll lifestyle. The idea of going to our little church seemed "weird," and "old fashioned" - in

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short, a waste of time. I gave it little or no thought as I soon had my eyes firmly planted upon my selfish desires and myself as the ultimate center of my universe.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am extremely grateful for my grandparents and what they did for me. They loved me and provided for me in every way they knew how. They did not neglect disciplining me when I needed it. But as I grew older, so did they and though they were aware of some of the unsavory changes taking place in my life, I understand now that they were lost as to know just what to do with me. It is certain that the biblical value system, which parents should employ, was sorely missing in our home. This is in no way a knock on my grandparent's character or upon their earnest desire to see me grow up right. However, one cannot teach what one does not know and as I look back it is apparent to me that instead of growing closer to God, our entire family moved further away.

My grandmother had tried to deal with me but I was out of control and not willing to listen much to what she or my grandfather had to say. I know I grieved them greatly in those days and only wish I had come to my senses in time to get things right with my grandfather before his death in the early 70's. By hiding my sin, in particular the drug use, they really knew relatively little of what was really going on in my life. It wasn't until years later that I allowed the truth to surface of how my teen years were spent with a joint in my mouth as I experimented with my newfound promiscuity. Life for me was the ultimate in "doing your own thing" - a prescription for certain disaster.

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Some may wonder, "What's wrong with that? We live in a free society. Besides, everybody's doing it!" I understand that rationale. I felt that way for many years, living in my "do your own thing" existence. I couldn't see what harm could come from getting all of the self-gratification possible. After all, it was my life.

At seventeen, with one girl pregnant and my 23 year-old girlfriend very upset, I split for the West Coast. That was

where it was all happening: success, possible stardom, fame, and fortune. And for me, it would be a fresh start. But nothing in my life really changed except the scenery. By twenty-one, I was playing regularly in Seattle area recording studios and nightclubs. Playing lead guitar and doing most of the arranging for the groups I was in, my songs were full of lyrics about love, but I didn't have a clue about what that word really meant.

Life had become one big "high". Sex, drugs and rock n' roll were all I really cared about. Traveling with my band and living with one girl, while spreading myself around to any willing groupies and taking mind expanding MDA, psychedelic mushrooms, and LSD became my daily staples. All the while I was after the elusive record contract that would enable me to "make it" in the music business. I was searching for reality in eastern mysticism – something we now call "New Age." I had a lingering affair with a bonafide practicing witch who dabbled in candle magic and astrology. I wanted to know why I existed and where I was going, but my very existence was distorted and the forecast for my future was at best "cloudy with limited visibility."

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With my search for reality at a dead end, I found myself burnt out, disillusioned and in a fog, I left the group and invested what I had into a recording studio. It was there that I found the most success by worldly standards. From that first small studio, I moved through several others and finally became the studio manager for what is now advertised as one of the largest state-of-the-art recording complexes on the West Coast. I had found my niche. I had a gift for hearing sounds and arranging music. Future Grammy Award winners Kenny G, the metal group Queensryche, and others were regulars there. I had my own production company, a Lincoln Continental (gained in a failed record deal), and more money than sense. I was on my way - to what, I didn't know, but I was going!



*Eric Barger on stage at the
Paramount Theater, Seattle, 1972-73*

I continued to play in a local bar with friends "just for the party." That group was called "The Sin City Ramblers." With all of my apparent successes, I had actually hit the bottom . . . thinking I was heading for the top.

It was at this point in my life that I met Melanie. At first, she was destined to be no more than just another notch on my belt, another sexual trophy. But I really began to feel something different for her. After knowing her for only three weeks, I

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moved out of my girlfriend's house and did what I always said I'd never do - I got married!

Melanie and I had a lot in common. She had a library of reference books on witchcraft and the occult. We were both into partying, drugs, and rock n' roll. What else was there? In my confused mind, life was complete. But the bliss didn't last. It wasn't long before Melanie found that I couldn't be satisfied with just her. The scars of a life without morals were deep and impossible to change - or so I thought. Each day at home was a fight. Since I never knew what responsibility truly was, I ran to the things that made me feel good: my studio and my cocaine.

Marriage just didn't fit in my plans. Though we had eloped in what I thought was true love, the daily responsibilities of a committed life together hindered me. But as far as I could understand what love was, I loved Melanie. What was I to do? I see now that I really loved the convenience of marriage, but had no understanding of the respect and care that comprises authentic unconditional love.

We tried marriage counseling, the secular brand. After two visits, we both agreed that was a dead end. So on we went - drugging and drinking and partying and bickering.

One day during a heated argument, Melanie threw a two-inch thick phone directory of yellow pages at me. I had made a smart comment about getting our lives straightened out through a marriage counselor. Shaking off being nailed in the back of the head with the yellow pages, I picked them up, shook them at her, and for reasons unknown to me, I said, "But it's gotta be a Christian marriage



*Eric Barger in his first studio -
(mid 70's)*

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counselor." She screamed, "You figure it out; you *@&\$%!!" and slammed the bedroom door, locking it for the night.

The next morning I opened those same yellow pages to "religious counselors", closed my eyes and jabbed my finger at the page. The phone rang and a man answered, "Good morning, God bless you." The number I had called - *at random, or so I thought* - was that of a real live, Bible-believing, Christian minister who counseled people from the office of his real estate firm.

I explained that my wife and I had "problems" and we needed a counselor. In the back of my mind I kept thinking, "She is the one who needs help, so I'll get this counselor so she'll get off my back and leave me alone!" What I didn't realize was how desperately that I needed help too, as well as our daughters, having been raised in an ungodly environment where drugs ruled from behind closed doors and rock n' roll was the master of ceremonies.

During that first conversation with the counselor, he asked if we were Christians. I said, "Oh sure. We were both baptized in the Methodist church when we were babies" (her in Iowa and me in West Virginia). Besides, I was thinking, what did he think we are? We weren't Hindu or something and we lived in America. Of course we're Christians!

The counselor knew just by the way I had answered the questions that he'd asked that I didn't have any notion of who God was, and surely didn't have a personal relationship with His Son. To my knowledge, that was the first occasion in my adult life when I had communicated about anything the least bit theological with a born-again Christian. In all the nights I had performed in bars and concert halls, and on the many occasions I had travelled and conversed with people, I never recall **anyone** ever evangelistically sharing the salvation message of new life through Jesus Christ with me. I had once even been hired to help write, record, and perform in a live presentation of a Christian "rock-opera" in which I played the part of the Apostle Peter no less! Yet, if anyone ever actually did challenge me about my need to know

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Jesus personally, it doesn't come to mind at all. What a tragic and telling indictment against the church in America.

Ted, the counselor, would eventually counsel Melanie and I separately or together over fifty times. It was during these sessions that he kept suggesting something that I didn't understand nor want: that I "take responsibility in our home." He also kept talking about the Bible - something I knew only as a "good book." For though I called myself a "Christian", I knew nothing about God.

After just two or three sessions with Ted, I began making up any excuse possible to get out of going to see him. However, Melanie kept going and was genuinely seeking and receiving help. She was immediately drawn to his presentation of Scripture. I however, felt very uncomfortable and wanted no part of this business. I know now that while she was being drawn by the Holy Spirit that God was also after me, but I wasn't at all willing or ready - yet.

I came home from the studio one evening in my usual state of being loaded on drugs to find a Bible sitting on the coffee table. I thought, "Well, isn't that nice . . . as long as Melanie doesn't get weird with it."

She got weird.



Eric and Melanie's wedding photos

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Melanie began to read the Bible and supernaturally God slowly drew her to faith in the Jesus that the pages revealed to her. She stopped being my drug partner. Our \$500-\$1,000 a week habit was now mine alone. Her speech changed. She stopped smoking, drinking, and partying. She was different. But my life was still on a downward spiral that came to a head when she cajoled me into going to a counseling session. When Ted asked in closing, as he always did, if either of us wanted to "receive Jesus as savior", Melanie said yes. With huge tears flowing down her cheeks, he led her line-by-line in a prayer of commitment. I watched as my wife made an open confession of her faith. But I determined that no way was He getting me!

I had long since disdained the counseling, but now she had "flipped out" and become a "Jesus freak." I'd had it. I promptly packed a bag and left her for several days, but as time passed, I missed her and our girls and I was getting tired of sleeping on the floor at the recording studio. So back I came to find that her witchcraft books were gone - not because a well-meaning Christian had advised her to throw them out, but because God had already dealt with her heart that she only needed ONE book. She had also discovered "Christian" music, and I had to admit that it was indeed pretty good. It had life and was a far cry from what I had always thought church music was. I had always thought that Christian music was an organ playing in a minor key that made you cry or feel depressed.

There was one more change. Over the span of just a few days, she had become like the Apostle Paul's sister! But when she realized that preaching at me was not going to facilitate any change, she started loving me unconditionally, which was nearly unbearable. It was then that I began to feel an inkling of what I now understand to be the drawing of the Holy Spirit as He began wooing my heart. Still, I rejected God. Though He was showing me close up in Melanie what He can do to cleanse and restore a life, I was deeply entrenched in my hopeless condition.

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Weeks passed, then months. We were still together, in theory, but it was anything but happy or peaceful. Melanie read her Bible and attended a Bible study group and church services, while I plunged deeper into cocaine and my work. She was going to Heaven, while I was going to Hollywood! I had lost my drug buddy and partner in perversion but I was still determined to follow “my dream”, regardless of what it cost or where it led.

Then, one Friday night Melanie discovered my car close to a girlfriend’s house. Though she didn’t catch me there, I knew I’d been caught by the note she left on my windshield. That night I did as much coke as I ever had, throwing me into a state of hyper-paranoia. I spent the next day in a hotel room trying to “come down.” The coke had taken me into a new level of experience but not a good one. I couldn’t stop shaking, and my worst fear was realized when I found my dealer had run out of the white powder I craved.

Melanie spent that day praying and crying to God for direction. She and our counselor had prayed together on the phone at 1AM, “God . . . whatever it takes . . . GET ERIC!”

Sunday was a cold, rainy Seattle day. Melanie went to the bookstore to find something that would give her peace. Finding nothing on “peace”, she walked out with *Racing Toward Judgment* by prophetic author David Wilkerson. Reading it entirely, her mind had been diverted from dwelling on me. For all she knew, I could have been dead by then, but she was comforted with the peace that only knowing God can give.

My memory blurs on the actual chronology of events from those days. Concerning what happened that night, Melanie has had to help me accurately reconstruct this story. She says that in my drunken state, I came through our front door screaming obscenities at her. Just as had been my habit, I began blaming her for all our problems. This is often the kind of demented psychology that individuals execute on others, when they are themselves unwilling to take responsibility for their own failings.

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At some point, I simply sat down on the floor and passed out. Two hours later, I came to with perhaps the worst drug and alcohol hangover of my life. I hadn't slept in three days, had overdosed severely, and had been drinking heavily for most of that period. All I had on my mind was finally ending our ruined marriage – the reason I had come back to our house earlier that night.

I climbed up onto the couch where she had been sitting quietly praying for me. Confused and depressed, I was trying to muster up some sort of cowardly courage to inform her that after throwing the word “divorce” at each other in our fights month after month that I was finally going to do it. It was at this point that I picked up the book that was lying there between us. In my nervousness, I simply flipped *Racing Toward Judgment* open to page 60. There on the left side of the page, underlined with my wife's pen from just hours before were three words: “GOD HATES DIVORCE!”

It was then - at the lowest state of my life - that I finally reached out to God.

“Behold I stand at the door and knock,
if anyone shall open it, I will come in,
eat with him and he with me.

Revelations 3:20



Jesus is waiting...
All You have to do...
IS ASK HIM IN!

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I fell on the floor and burst into tears. My wife began to cradle me in her arms. I know now that through her, Jesus was hugging the adulterous, abusive, drug addict. I genuinely pleaded with God (and my wife) to forgive me. I'd said I was sorry to her before, but only

because I had been caught. This time however, I had hit the bottom and I really meant it. I was finally crying out to the God who I had heard about in that Methodist Sunday School two decades earlier, and who had radically transformed my wife, delivering her from the same pit that He was now pulling me out of.

I was forgiven right there of every evil thing I had ever done. How am I sure? Because the Bible promises that "...whosoever calls on the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED" (Rom. 10:13). You might ask, "But how can you trust the Bible?" One simple thing separates the Bible and Christianity from every other religion: the historical fact that Jesus Christ died and rose from the grave. I had searched enough for "inner enlightenment" to know that the answer to life didn't lie inside of me or in the teaching of dead sages.

For the first time, I had an inexpressible feeling of wholeness and value. I was clean. I was saved! And although I never checked into a drug or alcohol rehabilitation center, I miraculously never experienced any withdrawals from the years of substance abuse. God's Holy Spirit came and did it all!

But What About You?

My prayer is that you won't have to "hit the bottom" on your way to what you think is the top. You don't have to. How tragic that so many people have to get to their very lowest place before they look around and realize the mess they are in and that they can't solve it alone.

Though many people comment to me that we have a "great" testimony, I really wish my story were much different. I wouldn't wish what Melanie and I experienced all those years on anyone. More than once I have wrapped my arms around my now-grown daughters and asked their forgiveness for the things I did during their formative years, most of all for just neglecting to be a good, loving dad.

Some "church people" hear a story like ours and think, "My, they really needed God. Isn't it nice that they got straightened out?" But you need to understand that each and every person needs the same cleansing experience from life's sins that Melanie and I received.

As human beings, we share in common the fact that we have each sinned (Rom. 3:23). Yet many want to rationalize that they are surely better than most and believe that God must grade on a curve, sending only the *really* bad people to hell. But as much as some want to believe so, that is not what the Bible teaches. God does not judge arbitrarily. It is a lie of Satan and part of our flawed human thinking to believe that God will accept us just because we're good and kind or that any good works we could accomplish can save us eternally. The fact is there is *nothing* - no good deeds or human works - that we can ever do that can save us (Eph. 2:8-9). To believe that we can redeem and then save ourselves is a deception that will take millions of people on a one-way trip to hell (Rom. 6:23). But you don't have to go there, and God has provided a way out!

Because of God's great love for us, Jesus Christ came to earth and sacrificed Himself for us. He took our place and paid the penalty

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for each and every one of our sins. He died and resurrected and in doing so, He triumphed over death, hell and the grave. He has already paid the price for you to enter God's Heaven - forever. All you have to do is first ask Him for forgiveness, and then decide to repent, that is, turn from your sins and follow Him with all your heart.

He didn't come to spoil your fun or ruin your life. Jesus came to provide us with abundant life (John 10:10). He offers real, lasting peace and joy for our lives on earth and for all eternity! The joy and peace of knowing Him is the greatest high I've ever known. This is NOT "religion." This is a personal relationship with the creator of the Universe!

So, we are all faced with a choice. What will YOU do with Jesus? The Bible implores us not to put it off. Jesus is waiting on your decision now, but He won't be for long. He's coming back for His people, those who have put their trust in Him by faith (1 Thess. 4:13-18). A convergence of biblical signs announcing His arrival is all around us. These clues indicate that His return for the Church could be anytime. It is imminent. Please consider as well that none of us have any guarantee of another day or even another heartbeat. What would happen if your life were suddenly taken? Where would you be for eternity? Remember, as I said before, there is a line to cross from being "lost" to being "saved." Have you crossed it yet?

Call out to Him today, even right now. Simply and sincerely pray something like this: "Lord Jesus, please forgive me for all of my sins. Change my life and give me peace. I accept you as my Lord and Savior. I believe that you died in my place on the cross 2,000 years ago and by faith I receive your salvation - not based on my goodness or actions but on your blood shed for me. Please fill me your Holy Spirit and give me eternal life. Thank you, Lord. Amen."

If you've prayed that just now, you may not fully understand it. You may not "feel" anything. Understand that just saying those words alone cannot save you nor can just repeating them

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transform you. However, this I can tell you without the shadow of a doubt that if you ask Jesus to forgive you by faith - and you mean it from the depths of your heart - He will answer that prayer! He will truly become your "Rock." If you ask Him to save and change you, He has promised that he will never reject you (Matt. 28:20). If you've asked Him by faith, He'll make you a new creation - with a fresh start on life (II Cor. 5:17-21).

To find out more, get a Bible (start by reading in the New Testament, perhaps the book of John), begin talking with God in prayer, sharing with Him your needs, joys, sorrows, etc. It's also important to find a Bible-believing church, where God is worshiped and honored and where the Bible is taught without compromise. Then as you grow in Him, and remain faithful to His word, watch what God will begin to do in your life. He has a great plan for you because He loves you! If we can help you in any way, please let us know. God bless you!

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ABOUT ERIC BARGER

After spending two decades immersed in the world as a record producer, rock musician, drug addict, and New Ager, **Eric Barger** (pronounced *Bar-jer*) is now widely recognized in the area of Christian Apologetics and Discernment Ministry.

He is the author of numerous books, including the best-seller ***From Rock to Rock, Entertaining Spirits Unaware: The End-Time Occult Invasion*** and ***Disarming the Powers of Darkness***. His articles are now syndicated on dozens of biblically-based prophetic and apologetics websites and blogs.

Eric has been a featured guest on many Christian and secular programs, such as **Southwest Radio Ministries**, **Christ in Prophecy** with Dr. David Reagan and **Point of View** with the late Marlin Maddoux. He has written for **USA Today** and has been interviewed by hundreds of print and electronic media outlets, including **Time Magazine** and **Fox News**. Eric Barger also serves as the co-host of the popular radio broadcast **Understanding The Times** with **Jan Markell** heard on over 840 stations as well as on his own weekly **Take A Stand! TV** livestream.

October, 2017, marked the beginning of Eric Barger's 35th year of full-time apologetics and discernment ministry. Each year he travels extensively across the US and Canada presenting his multi-media **"Take A Stand!" Seminars** in conferences, churches, and Christian schools.

Eric Barger is an ordained minister with United Evangelical Churches. He serves on the executive and advisory boards of ministries such as Jan Markell's Olive Tree Ministries, Columbia River Fellowship, and the apologetics group, Saints Alive in Jesus. Eric and his wife, Melanie, have two daughters and four grandchildren.

To schedule Eric Barger's seminars for your church or community, for media interviews, or for more information, please visit us at

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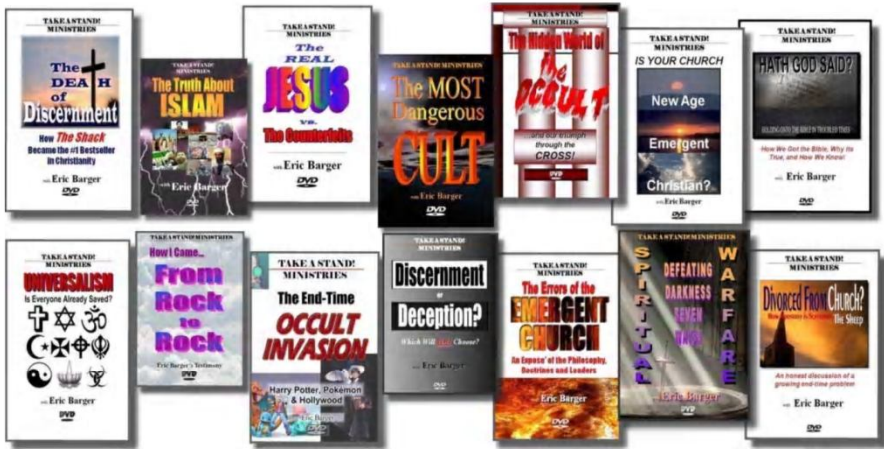
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