

The Bishop realized that sooner or later we'd be able to contact, and perhaps communicate with other civilizations throughout our Milky Way galaxy. His vision, his Mission, was for us to prepare for that time and to ask, "Are we alone?"

THE BISHOP'S MISSION: Yes No What

By William Collins

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

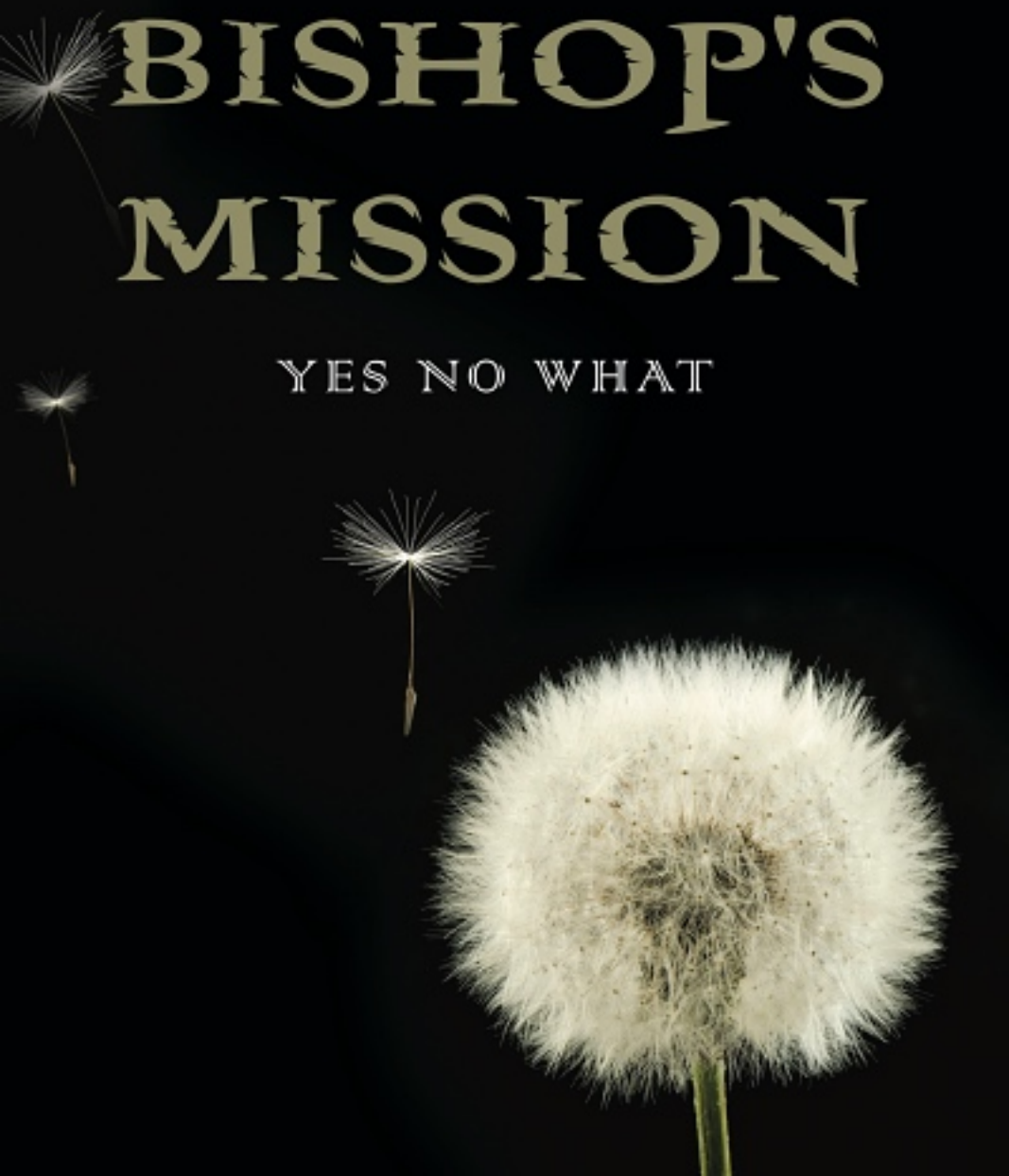
<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12244.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

WILLIAM COLLINS

THE
BISHOP'S
MISSION

YES NO WHAT



Copyright © 2022 William Collins

Print ISBN: 978-1-64719-964-7

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-64719-965-4

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

Printed on acid-free paper.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2022

First Edition

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
Collins, William

THE BISHOP'S MISSION: Yes No What by William Collins
Library of Congress Control Number: 2021924418

∥

CHAPTER THREE

∥

The Bishop was careful to have kept copious notes and made it a point to remember key words and phrases. Still, he regretted the decision not to make a video recording of the hours of deep discussion that transpired with the group of four erudite gentlemen he called his Cadre.

His annotations were subsequently extremely useful in allowing him to reconstruct most, if not all of the dialogue. However, the glaring omission was that he had made no provision for tracking who said what. It was not a serious error since the whole of it tended to knit together in his mind like angora herringbone. Major points and profound conclusions that would become the core of his ultimate goal loomed large. Much of what would have been extraneous or redundant detail simply excluded itself like so much chaff in the wind. Even without knowing who spoke, or who was responsible for contributing a gem of wisdom here and there, what eventually crystallized in his mind was border-line genius. Nevertheless, he dutifully reminded himself that the genius of the content was that of the Cadre, and not his alone. Yet, the human in him did briefly visit satisfaction in having brought this group of ordained ministers together in the first place.

—

Initially, there was silence. But then, after looking at each other quizzically, someone suggested that the starting point might logically be in considering what the delegates will want to know in order to support such an effort. With that, discussion among the four began in earnest.

“Well, just as the Bishop explained to us, we must persuade the members to realize that it is truly only a matter of time before science and technology advance to the point of giving us the ability to detect the presence of other civilizations, at least in the very broad neighborhood of our corner of the galaxy.”

The Bishop's Mission

“And that once given that ability, it will become incumbent upon us to follow it through; to participate rather than to stand idly by while the task – and the burden – is conceded to government agencies or even private entrepreneurs with their own agendas.”

“But, why would our delegates, and by extension, their congregations support what has traditionally been the domain of the government and/or military? This is space exploration and not the traditionally humanitarian area of focus that we’re ordinarily expected to support.”

“Because, to inquire of an extraterrestrial civilization what its spiritual inclinations might be, and what its history in that respect might be, is in fact, a matter of theology. It has nothing to do with government or military issues; it is both cleric and laic, it is for us, the church, to investigate.”

“The church is not in the space business and there would be no point of getting into the space business even if we could. How would we go about finding these other civilization? Would we attempt to participate in joint efforts of some kind with established government agencies or private enterprises that are already searching for extraterrestrials? Even if we could become involved, why would they be interested in us?”

“Money,” the Bishop interjected and then continued.
“If the delegates and parishioners are convinced to support this effort, if they are given good reasoning and believe it is a valid and worthwhile venture, then they will also support it financially.”

But first, they must agree that it is, in fact, a legitimate, worthwhile mission to undertake. So long as they believe that the task is honorable, and that their contributions will be responsibly applied, they will support it. And once the program starts to show fruition, we will be in a position to lobby, offer funds, and eventually join the agencies or entrepreneurs that can provide the access to space we will require.”

—

“In other words, we can’t go it alone. We will have to reach out to government or private enterprise to make the mission possible – with the offer of funds as our participation ticket.”

—

“If we are going to promote this as an effort that will sooner or later become a practical reality, and that broad support within our denomination will be required, why not expand the mission to include participation from other denominations? If we truly believe that there is latent onus on us to engage our efforts and finances in order to reach out to other civilizations in other worlds, why not reach out to others in this world to be a part of it, too?”

—

“Actually, there is the pending action being considered that the two eastern Pennsylvania synods that are now functioning as one, be divided into separate jurisdictions. And since this program might be viewed as an overreaching of our own synod’s province, would we be wise to avoid the potential complexities of joint synod resolution by waiting for the actual separation of the two to come about?”

—

The Bishop's Mission

“We should be able to proceed as though the two synods’ separation will, in fact, take place, and that it isn’t necessary to make provisions for that event within this endeavor.”

—

“I agree...”

—

“Shouldn’t we expect to contribute more than just funds? At the very least, as a faith-based organization we should have some say in how much influence we have on policy? There will ultimately be questions of ethics. Once we gain the ability to contact other civilizations, should we? By that I mean, would it be better to learn the nature of their theology indirectly and discretely, rather than to expose us and them to privacy issues by attempting to communicate directly; one on one, so to speak? Should we concentrate on unobtrusive observing rather than making direct contact?”

—

“That’s a good question, but consider the alternative. Suppose we achieve the ability to communicate, although I seriously doubt that will happen in our lifetime, would the government want to control what is said, or even limit such communication to their own parlance entirely? Would we, after having funded much of the effort, be relegated to nonparticipating observers and bystanders? Shouldn’t we negotiate how much control we’ll have considering the financial contribution we’d be conferring?”

—

“Actually, we should be involving our congressional representatives in this right from the beginning. We should be inviting them to the synod’s convention.”

—

“Absolutely! I’m pretty sure I have all the necessary contact information for all of our representatives in my office. I’ll make a note to have my secretary draft appropriate letters to them as invitations.”

—

“Remember, too, that if we involve other organizations, and other denominations in particular, we will want to have a clear understanding among us just what it is we expect at every level. We won’t want to advertise an open door for others to join us in this project without first establishing realistic policies that they would be expected to recognize and agree to. The primary aim of the project and its funding expectations come to mind as high on the list of things to consider when drafting such a policy.”

—

“So far, just based on what we’ve discussed here today, this can become a significant undertaking that could involve multiple religious, civic and government interests. We should be very careful about how much of this initiative we want to share or relinquish to these other entities. It would be very disappointing if after having done all the hard work that we’d lose control of its outcome.”

—

“I think there’s an important part of this that we haven’t discussed. I acknowledge that whatever outcome we are able to achieve, if we ever get to where we can actually communicate in the conventional manner with persons similar to us, and who are at a level of progress in their evolution similar to what we’ve gained over thousands of years, *and* we actually ask, has a Messiah been there, what kind of presupposed reaction should we have to each of those three possible responses, yes, no or what?

The Bishop's Mission

“For example, if the answer is, “Yes,” should we be satisfied with that and simply move on without interacting further, thereby leaving their civilization to its own consequences – a non-interference posture, perhaps? Or, should we investigate to learn if the Messiah is currently there, has been there some time in their recent history, or had been an archaic and insignificant minor prophet who over the ages morphed into a level of relevance that is now believed to be that of a true Messiah? If it turns out that a Messiah is there in that present time when we are visiting, should we endeavor to consult with him (or her) concerning our own understanding of the Messiah’s significance to us? Or, again, should we not interfere? And if the answer is, “No,” then should our follow-up question be, “Is he (again, or she) expected; and when, and so on.

“And still, if the answer is “What are you talking about?” then we’ve opened an entirely different conundrum. Then the onus on us is whether or not we should evangelize. Evangelical, is after all, part of our name. Spreading the Word is essential. It was the Apostles’ duty to evangelize. Why should it not be ours, as well? When faced with this kind of situation where we’d be standing among heathens, so to speak, would we not be imbued with what would then become the primary mission of this Mission, to evangelize?”

—

“The juxtaposition of evangelizing and imposition, even pontification can become very difficult to clearly define when addressing the unindoctrinated with one’s own version of doctrine – if you’ll excuse my phraseology. But, there’s a very thin line between being an evangel and a promoter who attempts to impose beliefs upon another under a banner of I’m right/you’re wrong. Even the better approach of offering redemption brings with it the insinuation that redemption is needed. How could we know that? Also, to elevate this challenge to the level of pontification would be an ecclesiastical

error in my view. To repeat, there's a very thin line between evangelizing and an imposition of beliefs. And to preach fire and brimstone, as our circuit rider predecessors did, would be pontification at its worst."

—

"But, you're assuming that a 'what are you talking about' reply would automatically insinuate ungodliness or a civilization of lost souls; that is, heathens. You've overlooked the possibility that a civilization devoid of the message of a Messiah would be in *need* of a Messiah. There is the possibility that such a civilization might have avoided the evil of transgression altogether, and then lived happily ever after in a permanent state of Grace. Furthermore, should that rare encounter come about, we should be mindful of protecting it from ourselves, and a very likely contamination of it.

—

"It seems that to seek in-depth involvement with civilizations of other worlds might be beyond our intended purview. No matter how comparatively primitive or advanced other civilizations might be, should we be so arrogant as to think that our need to satisfy our own curiosity (to answer that burning question) is more important than their sovereignty or sanctity?

—

"Other civilizations' sovereignty or sanctity would be no more shielded theologically than the early communities the Apostles went into to preach. The Apostles were told that if they were not welcomed anywhere, to simply *shake the dust from their sandals*, and to move on. I see no theological or ethical prohibition in pursuing this.

—

The Bishop's Mission

“There is the danger of making comparisons, too. If we eventually establish a dialogue with another similarly advanced civilization (or more than one), would we become snared in a kind of tar baby of our own making? Suppose we encounter a world where the expected Messiah’s return is on a parallel scenario of that here on Earth. Would we be tempted to examine comparisons of both histories for similarities, coincidental events, corresponding sequences and the like, and then make the mistake of thinking that we might be able to extrapolate mysteries out of what would merely be an empty study of apples and oranges? Would we become futuristic crusaders on conscientiously confused missions to purify our own testimony?

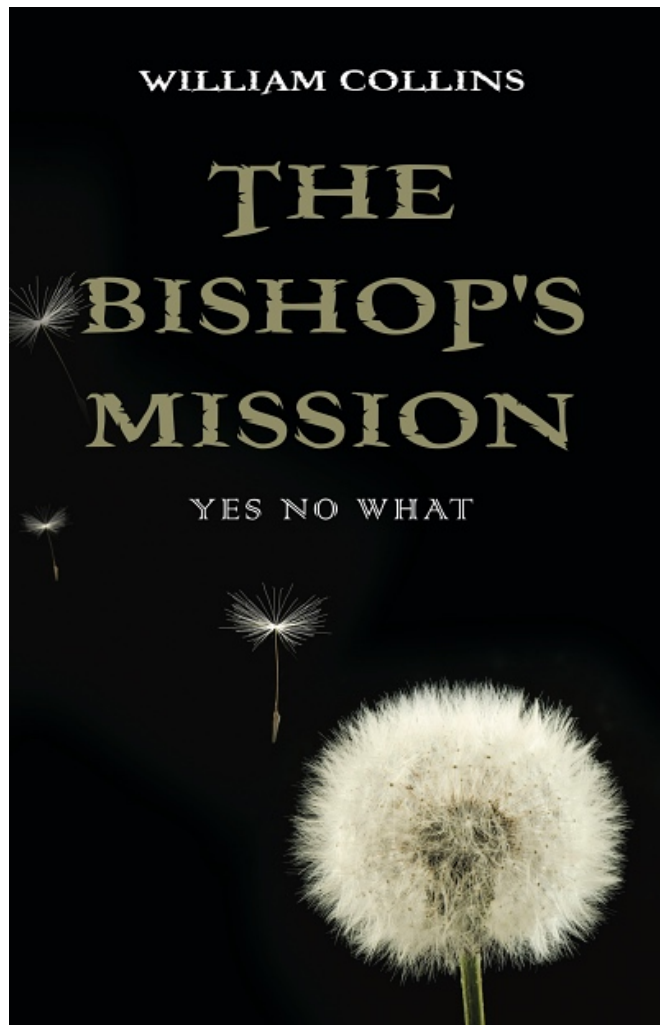
—

“I think we’re getting too far afield with all this worriment of communicating with citizens from other worlds. We haven’t even determined that they’d be similar in appearance and physical characteristics, let alone ascertained that we will have the ability to communicate. I believe that pondering the nature of unrealistic encounters is far beyond the scope of what our plan should be. As I understand our responsibility here it is to prepare presentations that will be delivered in turn by each of us at the upcoming synodical convention where delegates will cast a ‘yea’ or ‘nay’ on a proposal to investigate *the possibility* of a Messiah elsewhere, based solely on what we put forward. What’s more, we don’t yet know if inhabited other worlds exist. That part of it is still a glaring mystery. At this point in time, we know nothing compared to what must be learned and accomplished before any realistic notion of communicating with extraterrestrials should be taken seriously. Can we return to the root task that was given to us? Can we refocus on what it would take to first find other worlds, and then to spell out what we must do to engage them? This is what we must convincingly present to the delegates. This is our primary objective, don’t you agree?

—

Thus the lively banter proceeded as the Bishop had hoped. Every angle of his idea was examined thoroughly, and for the most part, conclusions, hypotheses, postulations and alternatives were proffered. Eventually, the Cadre, with the Bishop's counsel, managed to clearly delineate and divide the myriad of ideas into distinctly defined presentation categories that each would spell out to the general assembly of the upcoming synodical convention.

—



The Bishop realized that sooner or later we'd be able to contact, and perhaps communicate with other civilizations throughout our Milky Way galaxy. His vision, his Mission, was for us to prepare for that time and to ask, "Are we alone?"

THE BISHOP'S MISSION: Yes No What
By William Collins

Order the book from the publisher BookLocker.com

<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12244.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**