

FOREWORD BY
STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
& MARY BETH CHAPMAN

Appointments with
HEAVEN

*The true story of a country doctor's
healing encounters with
the hereafter*

DR. REGGIE ANDERSON
with JENNIFER SCHUCHMANN

Dr. Anderson's hope-filled stories help eliminate any doubt of heaven. *Appointments with Heaven* will comfort all who long to know that death is a transition—not the final word.

✦ MARY C. NEAL, MD

New York Times *bestselling author of* To Heaven and Back

In an age when so much energy, time, and money are spent to help us forget about our mortality, Dr. Reggie reminds us not just of its inevitability but even more of its right and beautiful place in our journey. *Appointments with Heaven* is a deeply honest and moving story, told by a true “eyewitness.” You will be encouraged and challenged by this remarkable journey to the very door of heaven.

✦ GEOFF MOORE

Contemporary Christian recording artist

Appointments with Heaven is so much more than a marvelous memoir. It's a heart-wrenching look at doubt, death, and grief. It's a mind-stretching account of supernatural encounters. And it's a soul-stirring story of just how close God really is. Read it, believe it, and you will never again fear your appointment with heaven.

✦ LYNN EIB

Author of When God & Cancer Meet

This was a great read. Intriguing, encouraging, inspirational. . . .
I couldn't put it down!

✦ MARK SCOTT

Retired president, LifeWay Christian Stores

Appointments with Heaven is not only Reggie's powerful personal story; it is also a call to each of us to live with our eyes and hearts open because heaven is closer than we think. *Appointments with Heaven* is a welcome reminder that we are never separated from the presence of God.

✦ MARK MILLER

Lead singer of country music group Sawyer Brown; producer of contemporary Christian artist Casting Crowns

Appointments with Heaven is a moving and inspirational experience that describes real-life encounters with God and illuminates how his light shines brightest when our lives are at their darkest.

✦ **FRANK MILLER**

Business manager for Sawyer Brown; Casting Crowns; and Colton Dixon

Appointments with Heaven





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HEAVEN

*The true story of a country doctor's
healing encounters with the hereafter*



DR. REGGIE ANDERSON
with JENNIFER SCHUCHMANN



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The stories in this book happened to real patients. To protect patient confidentiality, names and some identifying details of patients and their medical situations have been changed. Events are represented as closely as possible to actual occurrence.

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Appointments with Heaven: The True Story of a Country Doctor's Healing Encounters with the Hereafter

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Designed by Dean H. Renninger

Published in association with the literary agency of Creative Trust, Inc., 5141 Virginia Way, Suite 320, Brentwood, TN 37027.

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ISBN 978-1-4143-8045-2 Softcover

Printed in the United States of America

19 18 17 16 15 14 13
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Foreword



We have known Reggie Anderson for twenty-plus years. The Anderson and Chapman families have shared many ups and downs, creating a bond that few families will ever know.

Our children grew up together, attended the same school, played on the same teams, and did a lot of life together. So much so that in 2009, our son Caleb and their daughter Julia got married, thus continuing our journey. Now if only those kids would surprise us with a grandbaby!

We've experienced much laughter, tears, good times, and hard times. On a beautiful sunny day in spring 2008, our youngest daughter made her journey home to heaven because of an accident at our house. It was truly the day the world went wrong, and our lives came crashing in on us. Life as we knew it changed forever. Two of the first phone calls we made were to Karen and Reggie Anderson. They came to the hospital immediately and have been by our sides on this incredibly difficult journey ever since. They held us, housed us, and offered us the cup of compassion over and over in those first days, weeks, and months that followed. They were the hands and feet of Christ as we began all over again with our lives.

In the months that followed losing Maria, we began the process of grieving, healing, and coming to terms with what had happened. During that time we noticed Reggie writing a lot into what we assumed was a journal. We discovered at some point that he

was actually beginning to write down the stories of loss in his own personal life, as well as in his professional life as a medical doctor. Maria's death had stirred in him the impulse to write his own story.

As time went by, we would SEE that recording these memories was helping Reggie heal and reconcile the hard parts of his life. He began to identify these stories as divine appointments, and the more he wrote, the more he understood that God had been creating a much bigger picture than he ever imagined. Reggie also realized that he had never been alone and that the God of the universe had been orchestrating an elaborate story of redemption and purpose, which has now culminated in this deep, rich book.

God clearly speaks to Reggie in the form of miraculous happenings. Reggie recognizes those miracles for what they are: divine and deliberate pursuits by God to let Reggie know that he is intimately cared for. This country doctor from Tennessee is loved by God and has been blessed with an amazing gift. As Reggie embraces this, he wants to be faithful to tell others of the amazing lengths to which God goes so we can truly SEE him.

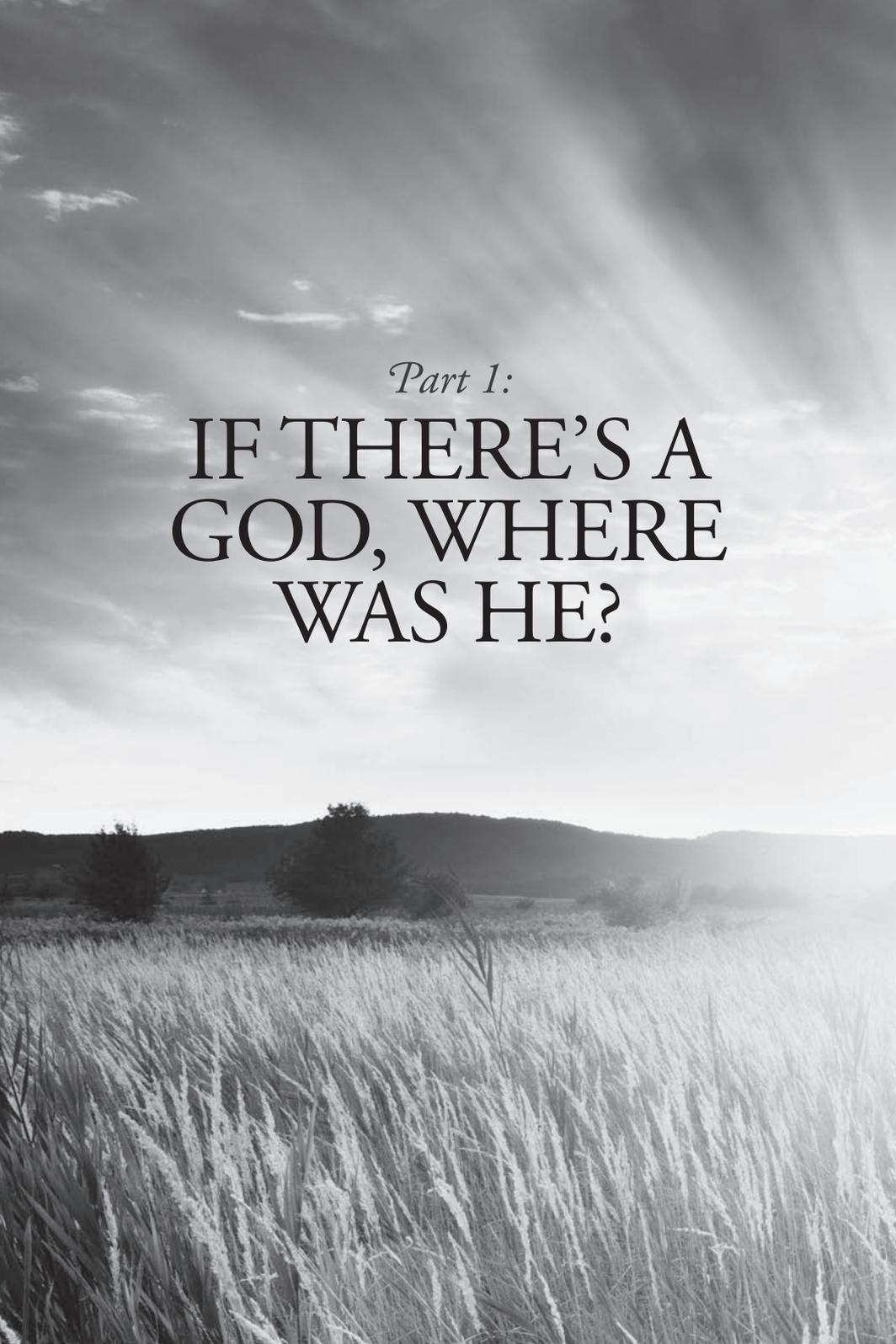
In *Appointments with Heaven*, Reggie has woven a beautiful tapestry, intertwining his own journey with the stories of other people he has come to know, whether through family, friends, or doctoring. In a poignant way, Reggie communicates his transformation from a grieving, scared young boy running from God into an amazingly intuitive doctor who now runs toward God in times of darkness and tragedy. From encountering Christ on a camping trip to meeting his wife, Karen, Reggie truly hears from God in unique ways.

Reggie has offered a precious treasure to you, the reader. First, his story unveils something you and I need to hear, know, and experience in our hearts . . . the truth that God pursues us in extreme and magnificent ways! Second, it provides a glimpse of God's eternal purposes. Reggie's appointments with heaven, woven through life stories, reveal that God has a plan for each one of us—a plan that includes pain, surprises, and joy—and that there is a reason for everything under the sun, if we choose to SEE it.

And now may you, the reader, treasure this book for what it is . . . an appointment with heaven that will make you smile and cry as you soak it in.

Choosing to SEE God in all of life,
Mary Beth and Steven Curtis Chapman

PS As an addendum to this foreword, I (Mary Beth) would like to remind you that behind every good man, there is an even greater woman . . . LOL. But in the case of Dr. Reggie Anderson, it's true. Karen is a woman who lives out the fruit of the Spirit. I have witnessed her giving of herself to her husband, children, and friends in amazing and unselfish ways. She has taught me to seek and pursue peace, and she is full of wisdom. Without Karen, there is no Reggie, and everyone who knows them knows this to be true. I am indebted to her for the encouragement she has been to me and to my children. . . . I love you, sweet friend.



Part 1:
IF THERE'S A
GOD, WHERE
WAS HE?

Chapter 1
THE PATIENT



SEPTEMBER 2011
ASHLAND CITY HOSPITAL, ASHLAND CITY, TENNESSEE

He was an eighty-two-year-old, proud Alabama boy, lying in the intensive care unit, and while I didn't yet know his time of death, I already knew the cause.

For more than a year, he had been struggling with myelodysplastic syndrome—his bone marrow had stopped producing the blood cells needed to fight off infection. He was immunocompromised and had developed a severe staph infection that was almost impossible to treat. His body had become septic, and the inflammation was devastating his organs. I knew his days were numbered, but I couldn't stand the thought of his passing.

I had known him all my life. He was a teacher and a farmer—intelligent and determined, proud and stubborn. He was also a man of great faith. He didn't see any reason to prolong his life on earth past the purpose God had for him. Like many of my elderly patients, he believed that he had an appointment with heaven and that Jesus was waiting for him on the other side.

As a doctor, I've seen what happens to the patient whose loved ones hang on too long. They desperately cling to their family member, demanding that doctors use extraordinary means to keep that person here when, really, the dying believer just wants to

slip gently to the other side. Sometimes doctors can postpone a patient's death for weeks or months, but it often involves drastic measures with the person being kept alive by machines and feeding tubes. The patient's quality of life isn't what relatives expect when they initially make the decision, and it's rarely what a patient desires.

Whenever God called him home, he was ready.

I didn't want this patient kept alive by machines, and he didn't want it either. But I had good reasons to lengthen his life. He had a close, extended family, some of whom lived out of town and wanted a chance to say good-bye. With intensive medical intervention, I could postpone his death long enough to allow them the opportunity to see him one last time. His family wasn't ready to let him go, and I understood that in the most intimate way possible. I wasn't ready for him to be gone either.

I thought of other deaths I had witnessed—including an unforgettable experience that happened while I was a medical resident.



Throughout medical school I had taken care of dying patients, but this was the first time that I, as the senior resident, would be the one in charge when a patient died. I didn't know what to expect.

"Dr. Anderson," the elderly woman began, her voice starting to fade. "Will you hold my hand? I'm going to see Jesus, and I need an escort."

That night, I experienced the veil parting—the veil that separates this life from the next. As I held the dying woman's hands, I felt the warmth of her soul pass by my cheek when it left her body, swept up by an inexplicably cool breeze in an otherwise stagnant room. I smelled the familiar fragrance of lilac and citrus, and I knew the veil was parting to allow her soul to pass through.

Since that first patient, I've walked with countless others to the doorstep of heaven and watched them enter paradise. On many occasions, as I held hands with the dying, God allowed me to peer into

heaven's entryway where I watched each patient slip into the next world.

I've sensed Jesus on the other side, standing in heaven's foyer, welcoming the dead who are made whole again. I've glimpsed surreal colors and sights and heard sounds more intense than anything I've ever experienced in this ordinary world. I've inhaled the scents of lilac, citrus, freshly carved cedar, and baking bread—more fragrant than I ever thought possible.

Sometimes I've even witnessed patients leave this world and come back. As they've shared their stories with me, I've often remembered the time early in my life when God allowed me to step into heaven's foyer, even though I no longer believed he was real.

The one thing these experiences have in common is the intensity of the sights, sounds, fragrances, and feelings that I sensed. Heaven is more real than anything we experience here, and the sense of peace, joy, and overwhelming love is beyond description.



Memories of other dying patients, as well as my personal glimpses into heaven, drifted through my mind as I sat at my patient's bedside in the ICU that day. I had every confidence that what awaited him would be more joyous than anything he'd ever experienced. But, selfishly, I wasn't ready to see him disappear through the opening. As the attending physician, the family looked to me for guidance. I could recommend a blood transfusion that would prolong his life for a few more days; with several transfusions, maybe I could extend it a week or more.

Or I could let him go.

Either way, I knew that he and his family would listen to me and do what I suggested.

I had a difficult decision to make, and my medical decisions were complicated by what my patients and I had experienced on heaven's side of the veil. But my struggle was even greater because of who I was.

I wasn't just the patient's physician—I was also his son.