

# BLOOD WORK

HOW *the* BLOOD *of* CHRIST  
ACCOMPLISHES OUR SALVATION



ANTHONY J. CARTER

## Endorsements

“Christians tend to speak of the blood of Christ either flippantly or not at all. However, in *Blood Work*, Anthony Carter helps us see that neither of these options is appropriate. The blood of Christ is a central biblical theme that deserves to be pondered deeply. Carter forces us to consider Christ’s atoning sacrifice and its many implications. In the end, we are left with a glorious, cross-centered, Christ-centered gospel that gets to the heart of our great need and God’s great provision. We are indeed purchased, redeemed, brought near, cleansed, sanctified, and freed by the blood of Christ. In a day awash with self-help books, it is refreshing to be reminded that we indeed cannot help ourselves, but God, through the blood of Christ, has done more than help us; He has saved us. Thank God for the blood!”

—DR. VODDIE BAUCHAM JR.

Dean of seminary, African Christian University  
Lusaka, Zambia

“This book will leave you in awe of the benefits of trusting in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. It is unquestionably thorough, remarkably captivating, and surprisingly clear. You’ll leave this book singing, ‘Nothing but the blood of Jesus.’”

—REV. BRYAN LORITTS

Lead pastor, Abundant Life Christian Fellowship  
Silicon Valley, Calif.

“*Blood Work* is both theologically rich and devotional. Anthony Carter presents a refreshing pastoral reminder of what the believer has been given through the finished work of Christ Jesus. This is a must read for the new believer, as well as for those who are well into the spiritual journey.”

—DR. ROBERT H. ORNER  
Lead pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Cherry Hill, N.J.

“Salvation is possible only because of the shed blood of Christ. Tony Carter helps us to better understand and appreciate the full significance of this great sacrifice. This book will set Christ’s sacrifice before you and allow you to view it from angles you’ve not seen before and others you may have seen but not fully appreciated. This is a great compact book that goes deep on a subject we can’t talk about enough and for which we will never be able to thank God enough.”

—REV. VERMON PIERRE  
Lead pastor, Roosevelt Community Church  
Phoenix

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ANTHONY J. CARTER

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To Christina



# Contents

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<b>Acknowledgments</b> . . . . .	.ix
<b>Introduction:</b> A DONOR FOR CHRISTINA . . . . .	xi
<b>1</b> OUR BLOODY RELIGION . . . . .	1
<b>2</b> PURCHASED BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	15
<b>3</b> PROPITIATION BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	23
<b>4</b> JUSTIFIED BY THE BLOOD. . . . .	33
<b>5</b> REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	41
<b>6</b> BROUGHT NEAR BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	51
<b>7</b> PEACE BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	59
<b>8</b> CLEANSED BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	69
<b>9</b> SANCTIFIED BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	79
<b>10</b> ELECT IN THE BLOOD. . . . .	89
<b>11</b> RANSOMED BY THE BLOOD. . . . .	99
<b>12</b> FREED BY THE BLOOD . . . . .	109
<b>13</b> HIS BLOOD AVAILS FOR YOU . . . . .	117
<b>Appendix 1</b> "O PRECIOUS BLOOD" (A HYMN) . . . . .	125
<b>Appendix 2</b> SONGS OF THE BLOOD. . . . .	127
<b>Notes</b> . . . . .	129
<b>Scripture Index</b> . . . . .	133





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To my wife, Adriane, and our children, Tony Jr., Rachel, Sarah, Siera, and Ana: Thank you for loving and serving me without hesitation or complaint during the completion of this book. May our love and lives together be an ongoing celebration of the precious blood of Christ shed for us.

# A DONOR FOR CHRISTINA

We were used to seeing delivery trucks come to the house. Being lovers of books, we regularly (sometimes daily) received packages from UPS or FedEx. So, when the FedEx truck pulled into the driveway one day, it was nothing out of the ordinary. However, as the driver walked to the door, it became clear that something was different this time. Rather than a package, he carried a letter.

Instead of coming from some online bookstore or publishing company, the delivery was from an organization known as “Be the Match.” I had never heard of Be the Match and could not but wonder why it needed to send a letter to me in an overnight express envelope. I opened the envelope, not knowing what to expect except the unexpected. As I read the letter, my expectations were met, and then some. The letter read something like this:

Dear Mr. Carter:

We are writing to inform you that you have been identified as a possible match as a donor for a bone-marrow transplant patient. It is urgent that you contact us so we can confirm whether you are a complete match.

I was bewildered. How could I be a match for anyone? I didn't recall donating blood or signing up for a bone-marrow registry. Besides, how does one get on such a registry? I know the Internet is capable of hijacking a lot of our personal information, but can it get our blood types as well?

As I pondered the possibilities, something came to me. The only event I could remotely connect to the moment had happened more than eighteen years before. Back then, I had participated in a blood drive organized to find a bone-marrow match for a dear friend of ours. Could this unexpected letter be the result of my donating blood eighteen years prior? Even if it was, how had Be the Match found me eighteen years, two states, and six addresses later?

The year was 1994. Robert and Winnie Benson were friends of ours. Robert served as the associate pastor of the church we attended. They were faithful servants of God and parents to four children—a son and three daughters. Their middle daughter's name was Christina. In 1992, she had been diagnosed with leukemia. Christina was 9 years old. The sickness was unexpected and obviously life-altering.

After several treatments of chemotherapy, a hopeful remission of nearly two years, and a lot of prayer, the doctors determined

that Christina would need a bone-marrow transplant if she was to survive. Unfortunately, no one in her family was a match for her. Therefore, the circle of potential marrow donors needed to be enlarged.

The call went out for a blood drive to be held at the church in March 1994. The response was tremendous. Not only did the church members come out in great numbers, so did people who lived in the surrounding community, and many more who had heard of young Christina's sickness. I was one of hundreds who donated blood that day (and apparently became part of a registry of individuals desiring to offer blood to save another's life). The day was filled with hope and anticipation. There was excitement and fervent prayer. Surely, out of all those people, someone would be identified as a donor for Christina. Unfortunately, the excitement of that day was overshadowed by the sobering news we received in the coming weeks—no match had been found.

With no match and the cancer taking more and more of her strength, it was only a matter of time. Christians around the world offered prayers. Christina battled the illness bravely and with a joy that humbled all who knew her. Nevertheless, to our dismay, Christina died on April 26, 1997. A Spirit-filled warrior to the end, her smile and consistent faith testified to the grace and love of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. She was welcomed into the rapturous presence of Christ because His blood did what our blood could not do—save her. Christina was 12 years old.

As I read over the letter from Be the Match again, I was not sure what to do. Many questions came to mind: What is the process for such a thing? What will it require of me? Will it hurt?

Who would receive the transplant from me? I hesitated to do it. How many people receive these notices every day and never give them a second thought? Besides, who has time for a drawn-out process and possible hospitalization for a period of time? Excuses and reasons for not responding to this letter flooded my mind. If I never responded, who would know?

Then it occurred to me: What would Christina want me to do? If someone had been a match for Christina, what would I have wanted him to do? What if it was my wife, son, or daughter who stood in need? How would I feel about a potential donor who ignored a request to save my wife or daughter? The decision was made. I quickly called and made an appointment for blood to be drawn and tests to be conducted.

At the local clinic, I did not know what to expect. The attending nurse, upon seeing my paperwork and noticing that I was being tested for a possible bone-marrow transplant, was amazed. She informed me that the majority of people ignore notices like the one I had received; she rarely saw anyone follow through with a request. I was shocked. Surely, I thought, the opportunity to offer life-saving assistance to another is something many of us would welcome with enthusiasm. Sadly, this is not the case.

Unfortunately, after the blood was drawn and the tests were conducted, it was determined that I was not a match. Honestly, I was a little disappointed. The idea of saving someone's life had grown on me. Nevertheless, my name remains on the registry, and I could receive another overnight express envelope any day.

As I went through that dramatic ordeal, it was impressed upon me just how precious blood is. It literally is the difference

between life and death. But even though my blood could potentially save the temporal life of one, how many more can be saved unto eternal life by the precious blood of Jesus? If I could give my blood and by doing so give life to another, how much more life can the blood of Jesus give? These thoughts led to the book you hold in your hands. Consider it a celebration of the life-giving, soul-blessing, power-enduing blood of Jesus.

This book is dedicated to Christina, because God used her to remind me that life is truly in the blood. Temporally, it is in the blood running through our veins. Eternally, it is in the sin-breaking, guilt-removing, incomparable, inestimably valuable blood of Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that as you read, you will be encouraged to sing with new meaning:

*O precious is the flow  
That makes us white as snow.  
No other fount I know.  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>*





One

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# OUR BLOODY RELIGION

*There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.<sup>2</sup>*

—WILLIAM COWPER

It has been said that Christianity is a bloody religion. Critics usually make this accusation, pointing to the wars, inquisitions, trials, and executions carried out over the years in the name of Christianity. We must admit that blood has been wrongly shed in the name of so-called Christianity, but Christianity would be a bloody religion regardless. It is a bloody religion not because of the blood shed by people in wars and inquisitions, but because of the blood shed by Jesus Christ.

What is blood? Blood is the life-giving and life-maintaining

fluid that circulates through the body's heart, arteries, veins, and capillaries. Here are some interesting and important facts about blood:

- The average person's blood is approximately 8 percent of his body weight.
- Healthy kidneys recycle four hundred gallons of blood every day.
- The average woman has about 4.5 liters of blood in her body. The average man has about 5.5.
- Because blood leaves an indelible stain, Native Americans used it for paint.
- During the early nineteenth century, it was believed that riding on a carousel would improve blood circulation.
- One out of every seven people entering the hospital needs blood.
- Someone needs blood every two seconds.
- One pint of blood can save three lives.

Here is an undeniable and important fact: *Blood gives and maintains lives.*

Christians should know this better than others. In the preface to the book *Precious Blood*, Richard Phillips writes, "At the very heart of our Christian faith is a precious red substance; the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> To read the Bible with any seriousness and sober discernment is to see the shedding of blood or

the implications of it on practically every page. If the history of redemption is a story told in pictures, the blood of Christ is the paint with which that story is portrayed.

The history of Christianity is filled with blood. More than anything else, the Bible speaks of the blood of Christ accomplishing for us the grand benefits that belong to salvation: We have been purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28). We have propitiation by His blood (Rom. 3:25). We have been justified by His blood (Rom. 5:9). We have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7). We who were afar off have been brought near by His blood (Eph. 2:13). We have peace through His blood (Col. 1:20). Our consciences are cleansed by His blood (Heb. 9:14). We are sanctified through His blood (Heb. 13:12). We are elect in His blood (1 Peter 1:1–2). We are ransomed by His blood (1 Peter 1:18–19). We have been set free from sin by His blood (Rev. 1:5). These and many other benefits remind us that the blood of Christ is central to all we are as a redeemed people. Therefore, we will consider each of these benefits chapter by chapter.

In examining and explaining the meaning of the blood of Christ, the seventeenth-century Puritan Stephen Charnock wrote:

By this is meant the last act in the tragedy of his life, his blood being the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption, and the expiation of our sin. The shedding of his blood was the highest and most excellent part of his obedience (Phil. 2:8). His whole life was a continual suffering, but his death was the top and complement of

his obedience, for in that he manifested the greatest love to God and the highest charity to man.<sup>4</sup>

The significance of the blood of Jesus also can be seen in how frequently it is mentioned. In fact, “the ‘blood’ of Christ is mentioned in the writings of the New Testament nearly three times as often as ‘the cross’ of Christ and five times as frequently as the ‘death’ of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

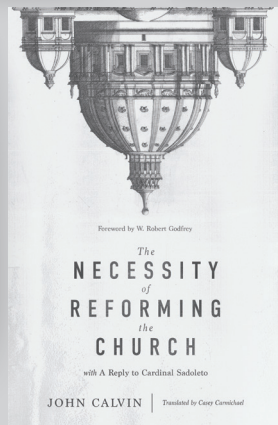
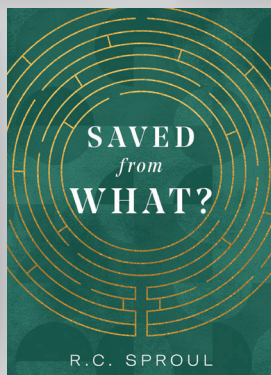
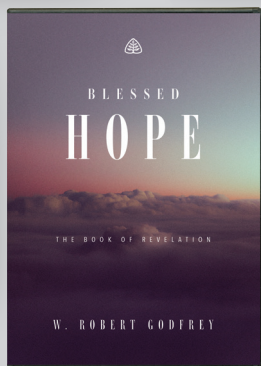
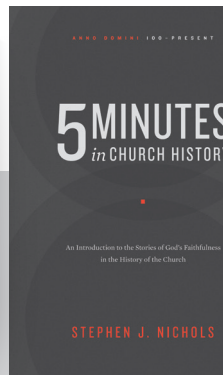
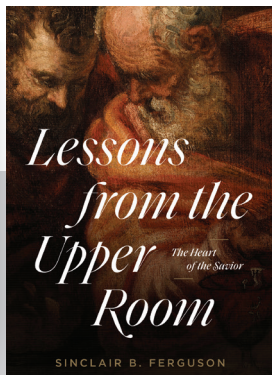
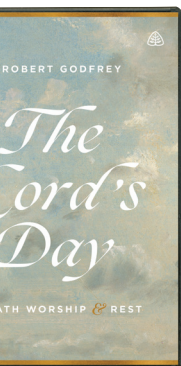
Therefore, it should not be surprising that as recipients of God’s gracious salvation through the person and work of Christ, we preach, pray, and even sing of the wonderful power of His blood, as the popular hymn by William Cowper demonstrates:

*There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;|  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.*<sup>6</sup>

The Bible speaks of the blood of Christ as affecting and impacting everything we do as a community of faith. In fact, not only do we preach, pray, and sing the blood of Jesus, we even participate in it.

When we come to the Lord’s Table and receive Communion, the Bible reminds us, the cup we receive is the blood of Christ. The language, in fact, is that of fellowship: “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *participation* in the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16, emphasis added). The word translated as “participation” is the Greek word *koinonia*, which also means

We want to see men and women around the world connect the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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