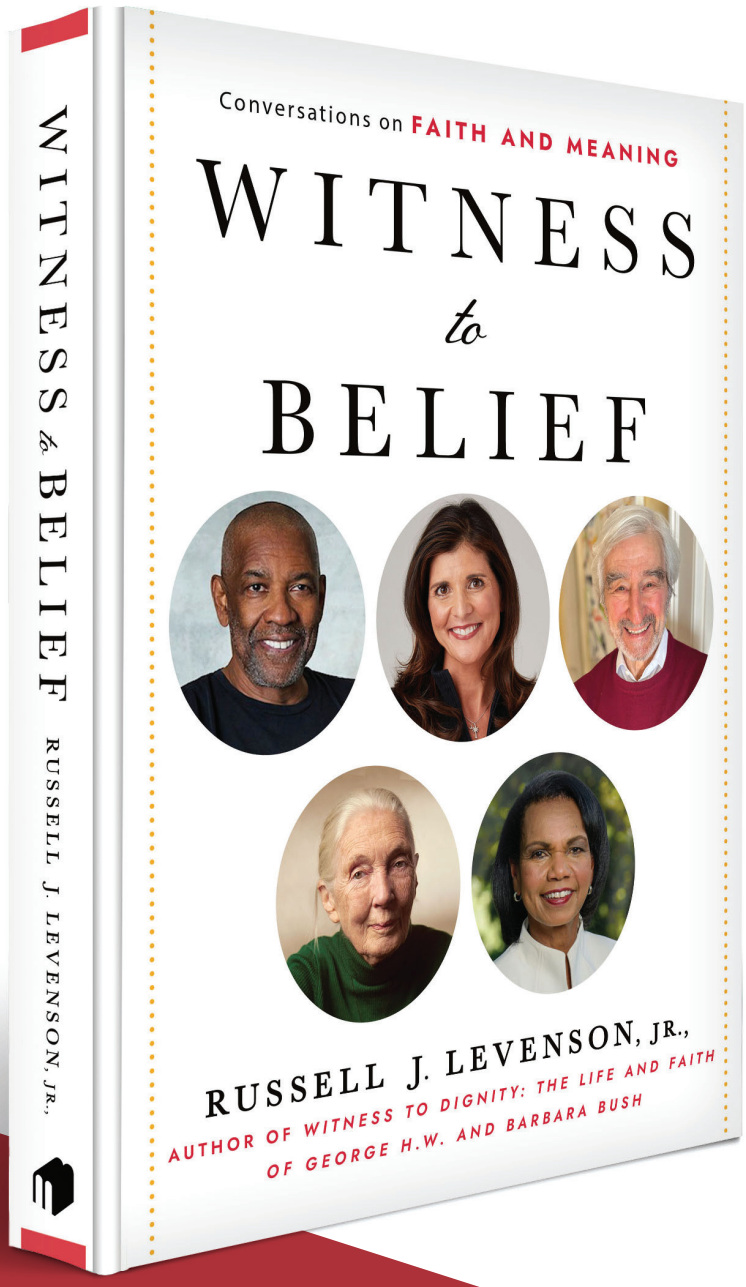
A series of in-depth interviews with extraordinary people about the impact of faith on their lives



NEW YORK, NY — June 1, 2025 — Morehouse Publishing is pleased to announce the publication of twelve wide-ranging conversations on the nature of faith with Denzel Washington, Nikki Haley, Amy Grant, Gary Sinise, Jane Goodall, Dr. Francis Collins, Brit Hume, Condoleezza Rice, James Baker III, Sam Waterston, Admiral William McRaven, and Jim Nantz.

From Russell J. Levenson Jr.—the acclaimed author of *Witness to Dignity—Witness to Belief* reveals what many prominent actors, artists, and public figures rarely discuss publicly: their Christian faith—and the central role it plays in their lives. Inviting readers behind the scenes and into the hearts of individuals whose lives are shaped not just by talent, but by trust in something greater, these twelve high-profile individuals candidly share how their faith informs their values, fuels their creativity, and anchors them amid the pressures and challenges of their lives. The result is a rare, unfiltered look into how a diverse group of people came to their Christian faith—and how they have sustained it over time.

From Oscar winners to cultural icons, each story offers a fresh perspective on what it means to walk with Christ in a world in which many people are reluctant to discuss their faith. They'll learn how Condoleezza Rice was so tired while working in Washington that she fell asleep many nights while kneeling down to pray. They'll read about how since her brain injury, Amy Grant has had trouble reciting scripture and so now sings it instead.

Conducted by Russell J. Levenson Jr., a spiritual advisor to many—including the late George H.W. and Barbara Bush—each conversation explores how these figures encountered Christianity, the ways faith has shaped their worldview and their careers, and how it helps them stay grounded.

Witness to Belief
Conversations on Faith and Meaning
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About the Author



Russell J. Levenson Jr. has been an ordained Episcopal priest for over thirty years and a spiritual advisor to thousands. He served as Rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, the largest Episcopal Church in North America, for seventeen years until his retirement. Levenson co-officiated and offered a homily at the state funeral for President George H.W. Bush. He also officiated and preached at the funeral for First Lady Barbara Bush. He is the author of many books, including the acclaimed *Witness to Dignity* and *In God's Grip*. He lives in Mountain Brook, Alabama.

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WITNESS *to* BELIEF • Russell J. Levenson Jr.

Author Q&A

Q: What inspired you to write this book?

After the publication of my book, *Witness to Dignity: The Life and Faith of George H.W. and Barbara Bush*, I received correspondence from around the world from people in all walks of life who conveyed a similar reaction. People wrote to tell me that inspired by George and Barbara's story, they had gone back to church, re-engaged in worship, began practicing prayer and Bible study—one even wrote to tell me he had entered Lutheran seminary! What inspired them? Not a sermon I preached, but the witness of two people who possessed all the world has to offer and yet in the end knew that their faith was their most important gift.

Q: How did you choose the individuals you interviewed?

As I share in the book, for every one person who agreed, there were probably five who declined (all, for the most part, kindly, I should add!). But I read and researched a great deal, and of course I already knew a few of these individuals personally (Gary Sinise, Sam Waterston, Amy Grant, James A. Baker III, Jim Nantz)—and it was my hope not to choose "perfect" people, but people who had, in some way, been a bit worked over by life, and yet continued to hold fast to their faith through it all. I did not want folk who used their faith as a platform to further their reputation or their career—but people who drew on their faith for all the facets of life.

Q. Did you encounter any resistance to any questions you asked?

No. In fact, I was frankly amazed how personal and in depth some people were willing to go. Someone will have to read the book to see what I mean here, but more than one said, "This is the first time I have ever told this story," or "Your readers may be a bit surprised by this."

Q: Were you surprised by anything your subjects shared?

Perhaps that each person was so transparent and so approachable. I was also surprised, I think, at how much time each person was willing to give. And, well, almost everyone has stayed in touch.

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Q: What do you hope readers take away from this book?

I am a Christian, and everyone in this book—in their own way—is a disciple of Jesus, so I offer the following from a Christian perspective—Jesus offered these sobering words, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? *Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul,"* (Mark 8:36-37*).* Frankly, I think all the world's major faith traditions offer a similar teaching—the work of tending to one's soul, a gift of God for sure, is the most important work of all.

Q: Did any common themes emerge across the interviews?

Yes, in the conclusion of the book, I offer a series of common themes—among them, humility, generosity, faithfulness.... these are wonderful people who have done wonderful things, but the Source for those wonderful things—connects them all.

Q: Why do you think these stories are important right now?

We see people of all faiths, including my own, in deep division with one another—and within their own faith traditions. And yet the tenets of the great world religions are, frankly, pretty simple—life is gift, receive it gratefully, live generously, love others. Look at our nation today . . . look at our world today . . . one can only surmise that we need more, not less, love. My tradition says that love itself, and the very expression of it, is God (I John 4:8). We need love, we need God . . . and we need that now.

Q. You begin with the interview with Dr. Francis Collins and end with Dr. Jane Goodall. Is there a reason you begin and end with scientists?

Yes—Dr. Collins, in part, came to faith by his own empirical investigations of the origin of humankind and the intricacies of the DNA strand (there's more to it than that—the "beginning" seemed like a good place to start!). As for Dr. Goodall (or "Dr. Jane," as she asked me to call her), well, her take on what happens when this life comes to a close—is alone worth reading the book!

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Twelve Voices on Faith



"In every season of my life, **it never occurred to me to abandon my faith,** it just occurred to me to try to access it more."

—Condoleezza Rice

"**I want God to be in charge** of everything and take me where he wants me to go, and I'll go that way!"

—Denzel Washington





"I gradually began to see that **science itself had pointers to a Creator that I had ignored,** despite my love for science."

—Dr. Francis Collins

"Making the decision to take my faith seriously, **to walk in faith with our God** in the Church ... it **gave me such peace.** God calls us to serve others, and I began to feel more and more fulfilled."

—Gary Sinise





"An awareness of God and His mercy is a powerful thing. If you can, **grab onto it** and take it on board and **make it a part of you.** It changes everything."

—Brit Hume

"Knowledge about something is not relationship with something, and **learning the Scriptures** in this way, memorizing them, singing them, **brings them to life for me**. They are not just words on a page, they lead me into a deeper relationship with God."

—Amy Grant



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"I love God's creation and when I look on it, it strengthens my faith, because it is hard to look at it and doubt God's existence. **How could creation happen, if not God's hands?**"

—James Baker III

"**My belief isn't a medal or a special category,** it's a benefit; I don't so much feel proud—**it's a gift**—as lucky."

—Sam Waterston





"If you want to look for bad stuff, it's not hard to see. **Sometimes you must look a bit harder to see the good stuff,** but it's out there, and God will use it to give you hope, and it is important that we never lose hope!"

—Admiral William McRaven

"**God is what makes everything better.** And I think that when you struggle—have God; when you celebrate—have God; when you wonder—have God. You can't have too much God in your life."

—Nikki Haley





"I have been given a mission—to defeat the opponent that defeated my dad. I believe, of all the things I do, that is the real reason the good Lord put me on this earth."

—Jim Nantz

"**God**—which is the only name I have for the Great Spiritual Power ... **gives us the inner strength, the courage, the determination** to not give in when humankind is faced with immense suffering."

—Jane Goodall



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