

Tribulation Central

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed...2 Thessalonians 1:1-8

Scholars Weigh My Research

by Dave MacPherson

<http://tribulationcentral.com/pdf/guest/mc-scholars.pdf>

(For more than 30 years my pretrib critics have falsely claimed that leading scholars condemn my research. Since those critics are in effect slamming poor, helpless, long-departed Margaret Macdonald, I hereby come to her defense with a few of the many reactions from scholars who generally haven't had a huge axe to grind either for or against the pretrib rapture view. My usual practice, by the way, has been to obtain permission when quoting personal letters.)

Loraine Boettner (theologian, author): "I think that you have done a magnificent job in showing the real origin of the Pre-trib rapture theory."

F. F. Bruce (theologian, encyclopedia contributor): "It is strange that Darby should acknowledge his indebtedness to a young lady in Limerick and say nothing about the young lady in Port Glasgow [that is, not acknowledge her pre-Antichrist rapture of part of the church]....If this work of yours can do anything to counter the influence of Hal Lindsey..., you will have rendered a signal service." Superficial---and even devious---scholarship loves to repeat Bruce's 1975 surmise that pretrib was "in the air in the 1820s and 1830s." Hired critic Thomas Ice knows that this wasn't a scientific conclusion (does reliable data rest literally "in the air"?), and Ice moreover has ignored Bruce's later statements complimenting my evidence!

Gary DeMar (theologian, author): "THE RAPTURE PLOT is the never-before-told, true story of the plot---how plagiarism and subtle document changes created the 'mother of all revisionisms.' A fascinating piece of detective work."

Robert H. Gundry (theologian, author): "As usual, Dave MacPherson overwhelms his critics with a superior knowledge of the primary sources. His is a rare combination of historical research and investigative reporting. Those who would refute him have failed to out hustle him, especially in the tracking down of information uncatalogued in academic libraries."

Superficial scholarship is aware that the first---1973---printing of Gundry's THE CHURCH AND THE TRIBULATION stated on pp. 185, 187: "The likelihood is that Edward Irving was the first to suggest the pretribulational rapture....the outpouring on Margaret Macdonald did not include revelation of a pretribulational rapture...."

But careful scholarship has long known that after Gundry saw my Macdonald findings, he deleted his Irving statement and substituted favorable comments about the Scottish lassie---changes appearing in his classic work since the 1980's!

John H. Kromminga (Calvin Sem. president emeritus): "The material appears to be well researched, and this impression is confirmed by the excellent comments you cite from well-established evangelical commentators."

Harold Lindsell (church historian, author): "...must reading for anyone who is interested in the [pretrib] origins...."

C. S. Lovett (pastor, author): "You have to be, in my opinion, the world's authority on Margaret."

Peter Marshall (pastor, author): "I am in emphatic agreement with you on your thesis."

Walter Martin (researcher, author): "[MacPherson has produced] a fascinating historical detective story...with surprising and not easily refutable conclusions."

J. Gordon Melton (editor): "According to the best scholarship available, the pretribulation, premillennial eschatology originated among members of the Catholic Apostolic Church as a result of a vision and revelation to Margaret MacDonald. See Dave MacPherson, THE UNBELIEVABLE PRE-TRIB ORIGIN." (ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN RELIGIONS, 1978)

Gary North (author, church historian): "...Dave MacPherson has inflicted a deep wound on the pre-trib camp by showing that a teenage Scottish girl named Margaret Macdonald...came up with this doctrine...." (Dispensationalism in Transition, Nov., 1988)

Harold J. Ockenga (theologian, author): "You have done your research well."

J. I. Packer (author, church historian): "From my own explorations of the origins of Darbyism I judge that you are presenting facts fairly, and I am glad you are, for I also regard dispensationalism as an unhappy aberration."

J. Barton Payne (theologian, author): "MacPherson has once and for all overthrown Ernest Sandeen's assertions that the Irvingites never 'advocated any doctrine resembling the secret rapture' and that to connect J. N. Darby and early dispensationalism with Irving's church is 'a groundless and pernicious charge'....For serious students of the history of dispensationalism the study of MacPherson's discoveries has become a must." (Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Winter, 1974)

The Prairie Overcomer (Canada): "...MacPherson's case seems to be watertight." (July, 1974)

Reformed Review: "MacPherson has done excellent historical research." (Spring, 1985)

Ian S. Rennie (author, church historian): "...it is likely that [Margaret's revelation] was grist for Darby's mill." (DREAMS, VISIONS AND ORACLES, 1977)

R. J. Rushdoony (theologian, author): "Dave MacPherson has been responsible for major change in the eschatology of evangelical churches by his devastating studies of some of the central aspects thereof. In THE RAPTURE PLOT MacPherson tells us of the strange tale of 'rapture' writings, revisions, cover-ups, altercations, and confusions. No one has equalled MacPherson in his research on the 'pre-trib rapture.' Attempts to discredit his research have failed...."

The Seminary Review: "[MacPherson] shows conclusively that Margaret Macdonald was the originator of the concept." (June, 1984)

Oswald J. Smith (pastor, author): "You have some excellent thoughts here that will be difficult to answer."

Merrill C. Tenney (theologian, author): "...the connection between Margaret Macdonald and Irvingites and Brethren is reasonably well established. You have done a valuable piece of research."

The Witness (oldest & largest Darbyist Brethren magazine in England):

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"What [MacPherson] succeeds in establishing is that the [pretrib] view outlined was first stated by a certain Margaret Macdonald...early in 1830." (April, 1974)

(The critics who have tried to cover up the above scholarship are basically the ones who've tried to muddy the waters by "discovering" hints of pretrib before 1830. For more on this, see my internet article entitled "Deceiving, And Being Deceived.")¹

¹ <http://www.tribulationcentral.com/guest/mc-deceived.html>