

New Release

# Opening the Bible

Essays by Howard H. Charles

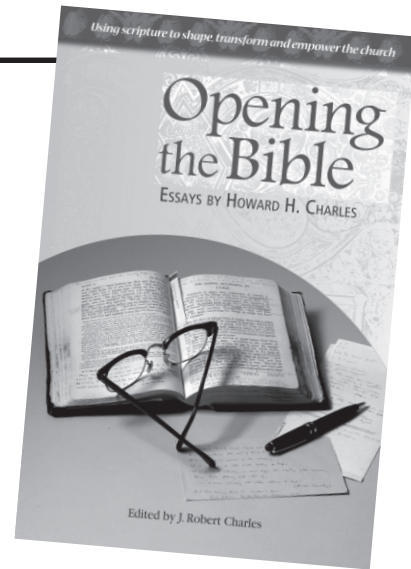
Edited by J. Robert Charles

In this collection of fifty essays, Howard Charles brings his gifts as a scholar, teacher, and expositor of the Bible to a variety of themes arising from the scriptures. Originally written as lesson helps for teachers of adult Sunday school classes, these essays will inform, inspire, and give insight to anyone seeking a better understanding of the form and content of the Bible. From the creation story in Genesis to the prophetic concern for justice, from the parables of Jesus to his crucifixion, from the Gospel of Luke to the book of Revelation, Charles opens the Bible in clear, simple language.

“For more than thirty years, Howard Charles’s *Builder* essays were a monthly gift to the Mennonite church, nurturing Sunday school teachers and equipping them for their labor of love. These essays reveal Howard’s characteristic depth of insight, clarity, and seasoned perspective. Respected and loved as professor of New Testament at Goshen Biblical Seminary from 1947 to 1989, he patiently led his students to grasp the biblical text’s distinctive structure and literary features, its historical significance and its enduring meaning for Christian faith. This pedagogical style shows in these pieces, which combine solid academic scholarship with spiritual formation, to nurture heart and head.”

—Willard M. Swartley, Professor Emeritus of New Testament, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

**J. Robert Charles**, editor, is director for Europe at Mennonite Mission Network. He lives in Goshen, Indiana, and is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church



*“For many years now I have found in the scriptures the wellspring of my own faith and life. Poring over their pages I have repeatedly been enlightened, rebuked, exhorted, encouraged, and challenged. Above all I have been pointed beyond the book itself to God who is the living Word in whom I have found life. It has been my great joy also to help others listen for God’s voice through serious and intensive Bible study and to observe what happens when such dialogue with the scriptures occurs. It is my constant hope that what goes on in the classroom may be not only an academic exercise but also a meaningful experience of growth in faith and in Christian discipleship.”*

—Howard H. Charles

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# Opening the Bible

Essays by Howard H. Charles

Edited by J. Robert Charles

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"These essays are wide-angle lenses offering panoramic views on the Bible by one who looked with the eyes of faith, attended intensely, and saw clearly. They are the gift of a master teacher who approached the biblical text with humble reverence expressed in careful scholarship as he sought to hear God's word and equip the saints for the work of ministry. Howard Charles continues to do here what he did for so many of us who attended his classes, the work our risen Lord did for his disciples at Emmaus: he opens the scriptures."

—Ron Kennel

Pastor, Clinton Brick Mennonite Church  
Goshen, Indiana

"For those who sat in Howard Charles's classroom, these essays provide a wonderful opportunity to again hear the voice of this wise teacher as he carefully, thoughtfully, and thoroughly works through a wide range of topics. For those who never had the opportunity to study under his tutelage, these essays will communicate with freshness the dual calling Howard Charles embodied: to follow after Jesus Christ as faithful disciple and to open the scripture as serious scholar."

—Mary Lehman Yoder

Pastor, Assembly Mennonite Church  
Goshen, Indiana

"These essays show us Howard Charles at his best as a teacher and writer who serves not spiritual junk food or sugarcoated fluff but sturdy whole grain bread and chewy granola. He helps us understand the text and its history, thus releasing its true power, its ability to shape lives. These essays are as inspiring as ever and may be needed even more than when they were first written. They invite us to open the Book to see how the word of God came thousands of years ago, and how the word of God enfleshed in Jesus brought new life to his people. It can do so again today."

—William Klassen

New Testament scholar, writer, and retired professor  
Waterloo, Ontario

"The joys of being a student in a class taught by Howard Charles come through vividly in *Opening the Bible*. Charles's writing combines unusual virtues: reverence for the text yet freedom to ask questions of it, passion for the message he conveys but without narrowness of spirit. His explorations in the Bible richly deserve the attention of a new generation of seekers."

—John Rempel

Assistant Professor of Theology and  
Anabaptist Studies  
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary