



Pollsters, professors, and people just about everywhere report that while Canadians are going to church far less often than they used to, they are still spiritually hungry. They often say, “I’m spiritual, but I’m not religious.” This volume, the latest instalment in UCPH’s *Jesus 24/7* series, is for 21st-century Canadians who don’t realize the Christian church has deep wells of spirituality to draw from.

Those of us in The United Church of Canada can consider ourselves fortunate. While we have demonstrated a real commitment to social justice and have a well-earned reputation for community-building, we are just on the frontier of exploring the 20 centuries of spiritual practice and insight the church has to offer.

The theology that forms the background of *Jesus 24/7: Guide to Spiritual Growth* can be seen in the original *Jesus 24/7*, now in its third printing, and in *Jesus 24/7: Youth* and *Jesus 24/7: Guide to the Bible*. I really believe, though, that even those who take a very different approach to theology than I have will be able to make use of the resources and exercises in this book. It still surprises many of us that when we can’t agree in principle, we really do agree in practice. And “practice” just might be the key word here. This guide doesn’t attempt to ground all of Christian spirituality in any particular metaphysical or psychological theory. Instead, it encourages people to take a more inductive approach: try this, and see what you think about it.

I remain profoundly grateful for the professors and faculty of Emmanuel College in Toronto, where I received my basic theological training almost two decades ago, and where I am just now finishing my Ph.D. in theology. I remain grateful for the encouragement of my instructors in the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California, who challenged me to begin writing for a wider readership. I am also grateful to friends in other Christian traditions—Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Presbyterian, and so many others—and to my dialogue partners in other faiths, especially my Jewish and Muslim friends.

For this particular volume I am deeply indebted to my faithful friends at Heritage United Church in Markham, Ontario, who suffered with me through the first draft of this book, smiling all the while. I scrapped that first draft altogether, rewrote the outline, and started again. God bless them for their patience! I am also grateful to Betty Lynn Schwab, who reviewed the manuscript and made helpful suggestions. And I must once again thank my family: my wife Janet, our daughter Heather, and our sons Geoffrey and Paul. They have been extremely supportive as Dad invested time and energy in new frontiers of spiritual experience to prepare to offer something different to people looking for a faith that works.

David Bruce