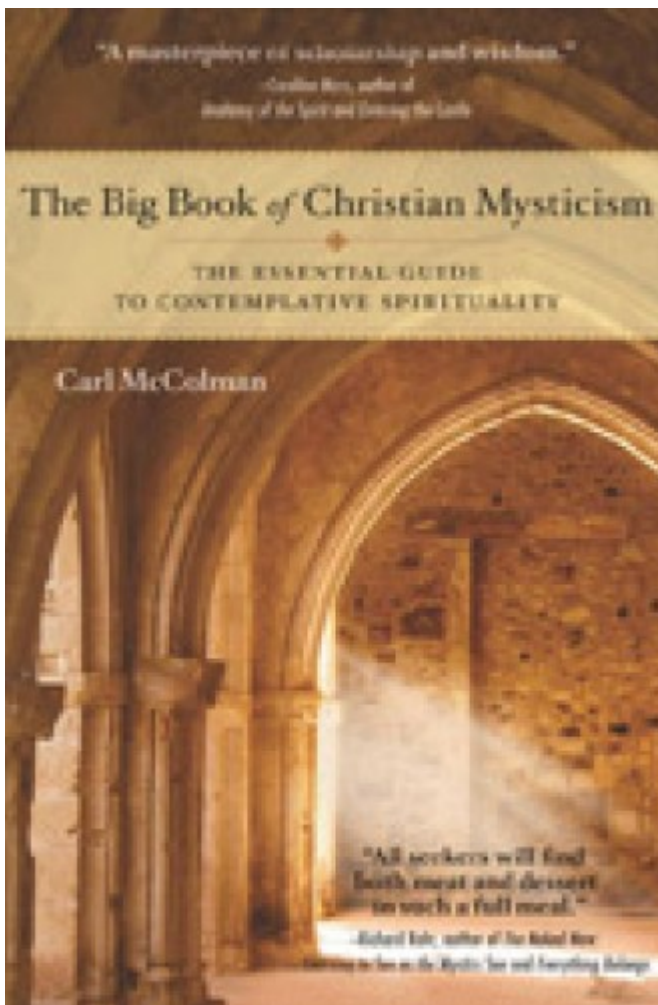


A review of The Big Book of Christian Mysticism

Books in the [November 30, 2010](#) issue

In Review



The Big Book of Christian Mysticism

By Carl McColman
Hampton Roads

McColman, a lay associate of the Cistercian Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, Georgia, knows you can be a mystic without being a Christian and a Christian without being a mystic. While conversant with both those types, he provides a two-part introduction to the Christian mystical tradition: one part on what Christian mysticism is, the other on how to become a mystic through a life of contemplation. The goal of mysticism is awareness of union with God or the conscious presence of God, but Christian mysticism is also communal and leads to a life of love and service to others. "Mysticism is, ultimately, simply the art of going to heaven before you die—or, perhaps better said, the art of letting heaven emerge within you now."