



# Hail, Holy Light: A Journey Through the Great Awakening of the Sixties

*Ken McCormack*

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Hail, Holy Light is about the Great Awakening of the Sixties—about epiphanies that came like flashing lights from a train to millions of people. The threat of the atomic bomb and shocking discoveries about racism and the Vietnam War led a generation on a spiritual quest. This book explores not only historical events, but also interior realities—myth, the collective mind, psychology, spirituality and social change. It is also a memoir of the author's personal healing. During the Sixties McCormack immersed himself in the revolution's underlying implications, and he bears witness to the widespread struggle that turned out to be the birth pangs of a new world vision. As Hail, Holy Light takes you on a unique journey through grief, ecstasy and accomplishment, it explores the rising New Spirit that rescued many from the emptiness of the Fifties. The emerging unselfish willingness to suffer for the sake of others is enough to restore humanity. But the Holy Light also turns out to be the lasting and healing salvation of Christ. The Holy Light that worked its magic on the inner lives of protesters and revolutionaries eventually dragged McCormack from the brink of compulsive drinking and suicidal despair. It carried him into a sacred field near an old barn where some overwhelming force blew through him as through an open window. He then sees the entire decade as not merely about the death of public heroes, but about the spiritual rebirth of nameless millions such as he. Sitting quietly on a haystack he is crucified on the hardest journey of all—from the old self to the new. The era began when John F. Kennedy and his glamorous wife rode into the streets of Dallas on November 22, 1963. They carried with them the dreams of a nation. The tragic assassination, however, followed by political revelations helped shatter the vision Kennedy embodied—the romance of Camelot. But the rising subculture that suffered the painful abandonment was also teetering on the brink of The Third Great Awakening in American history. For them the death-day was to be a birthday. The seeds planted by JFK and Aldous Huxley—who died the same day—developed into a major highway leading to the 21st century. Huxley, the author and quiet sage, the book argues, modeled that journey far better than the flamboyant president. With regard to Huxley's goals of self-transcendence, personal empowerment, and greater compassion, the Sixties appears a resounding success. “An in-depth historical and philosophical examination of the era of two cultural icons, John F. Kennedy and Aldous Huxley, followed by an inspiring memoir of the spiritual transformation of the author coming out of the consciousness awakening of the Sixties. Highly recommended!” —Karen McKinnon, poet. Her most recent work, *Set In Motion* was published by The Wildflower Press in 2009 and is composed of poems, journal entries and letters. “McCormack's book is an unfolding revelation. He delivers the impossible: a coherent reading of the 1960s in America. Through a comparison of two contemporary lives, John F. Kennedy and Aldous Huxley, we are shown the myth that died in that violent decade and the spiritual promise born amid psychedelic colors. The book combines the bold history and vulnerable memoir that often make for the best conversation.” —The Rev. Charles Busch, M.A. (Philosophy) from Trinity University, and Master of Divinity from Harvard University, is the founder of Peace Village and Fields of Peace and is Ordained in the United Church of Christ.

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