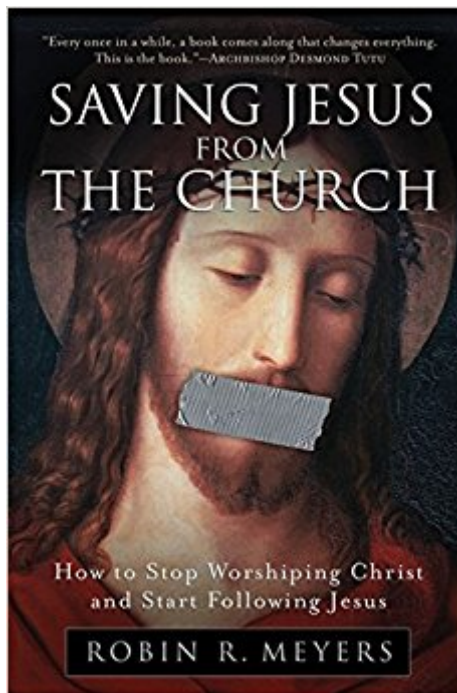




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Saving Jesus From The Church: How To Stop Worshiping Christ And Start Following Jesus



Synopsis

From One of America's Leading Pastors, a Bold Call to Restore Christianity's True Mission:

Following JesusThe marriage of bad theology and hypocritical behavior by the church has eroded our spiritual lives. Taking the best of biblical scholarship, Meyers recasts core Christian concepts in an effort to save Christianity from its obsession with personal salvation. Not a plea to try something brand new, but rather the recovery of something very old, *Saving Jesus from the Church* shows us what it means to follow Jesus's teachings today.

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Customer Reviews

“Robin Meyers emerges in *Saving Jesus from the Church* as a national voice for a new Christianity. He is a well read scholar and a superb communicator. He writes with a refreshing honesty and a disarming authority. This book is a treat.” • (John Shelby Spong, author of *Jesus for the Non-Religious*) “With crisply prophetic joy, Meyers calls seekers and believers alike to leave belief about God behind in favor of becoming imitators of Jesus. We can save Jesus from the church, and in doing so, recreate faith communities freed from hypocrisy and filled with hope.” • (Diana Butler Bass, author of *Christianity for the Rest of Us*) “Every once in a while, a book comes along that changes everything. This is the book. It is scholarly, pastoral, prophetic, and eloquent--all in equal measure. Robin Meyers has spoken truth to power, and the church he loves will never be the same.” • (Desmond Tutu) “The time is right for this book and this book is right for the time.” • (Fred B. Craddock, Bandy Distinguished Professor of Preaching and New Testament

Emeritus, Emory University)â œIn a progressive rather than negatively critical mode, in strong contrast to much of Far Right Protestantism, pastor/NPR commentator Meyers (philosophy, Oklahoma City Univ.) suggests with typical elegance that a recovery of true Christianity emphasizes compassion over condemnation, blessing over sin, and equity over individual prosperity. Highly recommended.â • (Library Journal, starred review)â œMeyersâ™ insightful and provocative critique of contemporary Christianity will stimulate energetic theologizing: deconstruction, reconstruction, or impassioned defense of the inherited tradition. Thank you, Robin, for convening this urgently needed conversation.â • (Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., president and founder of The Healing of the Nations Foundation)â œA perceptive book . . . Not many authors can present such progressive ideas and still come across as reasonable and loving. Meyers masters such a task.â • (Oklahoma City Oklahoman)

Countless thoughtful people are now so disgusted with the marriage of bad theology and hypocritical behavior by the church that a new Reformation is required in which the purpose of religion itself is reimagined. Meyers takes the best of biblical scholarship and recasts these core Christian concepts to exhort the church to pursue an alternative vision of the Christian life: Jesus as Teacher, not Savior; Christianity as Compassion, not Condemnation; Prosperity as Dangerous, not Divine; Discipleship as Obedience, not Control; Religion as Relationship, not Righteousness. This is not a call to the church to move to the far left or to try something brand new. Rather, it is the recovery of something very old. *Saving Jesus from the Church* shows us what it means to be a Christian and how to follow Jesus' teachings today. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I recently used *Saving Jesus* as the basis for a small group experience called *Following Jesus*. This book is relevant both to individuals evaluating their spiritual journey within traditional church and to evaluating where the traditional churches are at now, are headed toward (generally slowly downhill), and how we might reinvent church. The book evokes meaningful discussion. The chapter titles are mostly in the format of "Stop doing A, but start doing B." I found it more compelling to focus on the positive (doing B) elements of the book, rather than focusing on a tearing down conventional dogma. This approach is borrowed from "asset based development" theory -- build on strengths instead of fixing weaknesses.

Saving Jesus from the Church is a wake up call to the 21st century church. Rather than lamenting

declining membership and waning cultural influence of the mainline faith communities, Meyers travels back to the beginning of Jesus' life and embodied teaching to find a new way forward that is faithful to the earliest ways of those who sought to follow Jesus. The book begins with an introduction in which the author dreams of multiple characterizations of what Christianity is or could become that would lead him to feel he was not Christian and ends with a concluding chapter in which he restates his dream positively by sharing several descriptions of what Christianity is or could become that would assure him that he wants to continue on with his life of faith as a follower of Jesus. Situated between these contrasting visions are ten chapters focused on explaining why things as they currently are must be deconstructed so that one can reconstruct a 21st century faith that is far more consistent with that of the earliest decades of the first century CE. Scholarly yet pastoral, these chapters capture a new way of seeing one's faith that is more ancient than even the later New Testament books. The chapters are titled: Jesus the Teacher, Not the Savior; Faith as Being, Not Belief; The Cross as Futility, Not Forgiveness; Easter as Presence, Not Proof; Original Blessing, Not Original Sin; Christianity as Compassion, Not Condemnation; Discipleship as Obedience, Not Observance; Justice as Covenant, Not Control; Prosperity as Dangerous, Not Divine; Religion as Relationship, Not Righteousness.

I bought this book at [redacted] and appreciated its message so much that I recommended it to our study group. Robin R. Meyers has written a very provocative book that seeks to explode some of the ideologies that people have equated with being Christian. He asks, "What do you believe?" and then proceeds to suggest that belief is not the point; it is following Jesus that is the objective of Christianity. As another example of Meyers' approach, he states that taking the Bible seriously is not the same as taking it literally, meaning that much of the truth of the Bible is conveyed in myth and metaphor. However, Meyer claims that his book is not an argument against literalism, rather it is written for those who have walked away from the church, those who grew up in the church, but have sensed a degree of intellectual dishonesty as well as those who are simply non-believers. Readers of this book will encounter chapter headings such as "Jesus the Teacher, Not the Savior", "Original Blessing, Not Original Sin" and "Discipleship as Obedience, Not Observance". My guess is that the inquiring reader of this book will be stimulated to look further into the general subject of what Christianity is all about and come out with a fresh view that might even surprise him! Ernest G. Barr

I think this book should be required reading for every "Christian". It points to the glaring fact that a lot of main stream denominations have totally lost their way when it comes to treating their fellow

human beings as Christ did. Christ included everyone in his ministry. He ate with the poor, tax collectors, the unclean and anyone who had been marginalized by his society. He was more interested in how we should act than in what we should believe. Christ detested the rich people who used their money to declare themselves better than everyone else. He echoes the Dali Lama who in an appearance in Portland, Oregon was asked what he thought of Christians. His reply was that he admired Jesus very much but that he didn't think much of "Christians" because very few of them acted anything like Christ showed we should. Christianity shouldn't be a belief system, it should be a way of life

Too many Christians focus on what happens after death instead of looking at how to live here and now. Pastor Meyers brings the focus back to the message of Jesus on loving God and loving our neighbors. While we are saved by faith and not by works, we need to remember that if we are showing Jesus to the world, it has to be by our actions and our words here and now. The truth of that often gets lost and tends to turn off the very people we want to bring to Jesus. The central idea is love; too often we Christians miss that mark.

"Saving Jesus from the Church" is an eye-opening book written with wit and grace. Meyers, a liberal theologian in typically conservative Oklahoma, gives readers fresh perspectives on church history and doctrine and encourages a new focus on Jesus' words and deeds as revealed in the Gospels. Christianity should be more about action than abstract belief. Those who see the Bible solely as "history" (and not "poetic narrative") may find Meyers' views threatening, but folks open to new and different ways of looking at Christianity will find this book refreshing. We are reading this book in a Tuesday morning women's study group at church, and it has sparked lots of discussion and re-examination of our own beliefs. My guess is that most of us we are needing to deal with our own issues of doubt vs. faith. Meyers' book gives us a rather rich, nuanced approach to Christianity and what it can mean today to those questioning basic beliefs.

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