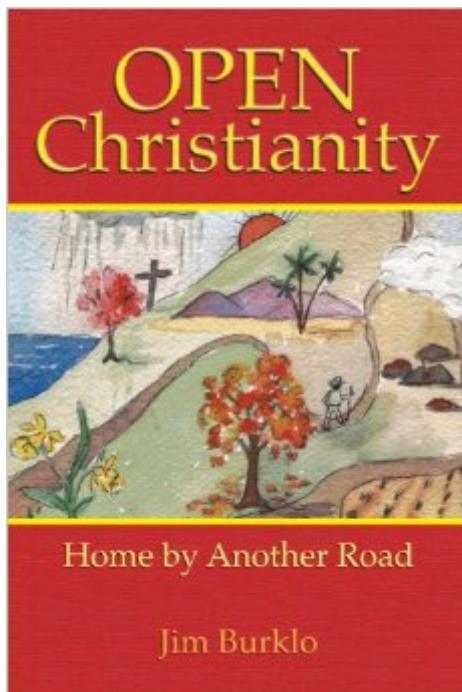


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Open Christianity: Home By Another Road



Synopsis

"Open Christianity" is an invitation to keep the faith but drop the dogma. Many Christian-heritage seekers struggle with conflicted yearning. They value much that the tradition offers. But the church door feels closed unless they accept beliefs at odds with logic and the truth of their hearts. "Open Christianity" maintains that yes, you can leave behind that which has ceased to make sense, and still be very Christian. Burklo's discussion of complex topics such as "a theology of 'enough,'" "soulful sexuality" and "the gospel truth" will be controversial--but enlightening. A product of the author's work as a Stanford chaplain, a Protestant pastor, and an urban/street minister, this book encourages spiritual growth that won't founder on efforts to believe the unbelievable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read this immediately after reading *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus J. Borg. The two books make many of the same points, but they are very different books. Borg's is elegantly reasoned and written, whereas this one is more personal and folksy. Personally, I prefer Borg's style to Burklo's. However, if you agree with Borg's ideas but find his style too dry and scholarly, you might like this one.

Burklo's writing is clear; his perspective is easy to understand. "Open Christianity" is a non-threatening invitation to see the Christian faith in light of 21stC world. Burklo's theology makes sense. His personal experiences at the start of each chapter become like modern day parables interpreted by the content of the chapter. This is a helpful book not only for inquirers, but for

seasoned theologians.

This book takes a sensitive subject, namely the reality of a bible that was not meant to be taken literally for all time, and makes a workable discussion for both the fundamentalist and the skeptic. For many, there has been a crippling point in their spiritual journey, when, the "rules" of the Old Testament are juxtaposed with the plan laid out by Jesus in the New Testament. Rev. Burklo punctuates ideas and theories with life on the street examples that are heart opening and humbling.

This is actually a pretty good book, and the author is clearly a kind, caring man who walks his talk. He's a much better representative of liberal Christianity than Spong, who is surprisingly mean-spirited and angry (from what I read of one of his books). What bothers me about this book is the full-on atheism behind the message - the author clearly sees Jesus as an inspiration for "social justice" and helping the poor, but he doesn't believe in the resurrection or even in an afterlife! Instead, the reason you have eternal life is that your brain shuts down before you experience death so somehow, in this netherworld of not-quite-having-died yet you may feel like you are living forever, and because all you ever experience is life anyway, because you can't experience being nothing, then that's your "eternal life." Hardly comforting. Because of this explanation of "eternal life," I'm left wondering what the author actually thinks God is, or what a soul is. He talks a lot about God and soul but clearly disbelieves in the supernatural. There's a middle ground between outright atheism (albeit, a kinder, gentler atheism) and the fundamentalism seen in certain Christian sects - this book did not provide it. Still, this book can be inspiring on other levels when it comes to helping others and making a difference.

This book is a clear account of an honest, faithful, soul searching journey into the heart of Christian faith. Jim Burklo shares the questions, concerns, and struggles that many of us face when we are authentically challenging our beliefs and striving to broaden our faith walk. Jim encourages readers to be willing to supercede mere reason rather than abandoning it, and gives the reader a solid strarting point for a transformative spiritual journey. Jim's book opens the way for both traditional Christian disciples and seekers from a variety of spiritual backgrounds to explore the Christ path with open minds and open hearts.

The ability to communicate the message of Christianity in simple and relavent ways is illusive , but not to Jim Burklo. I relished his explanations of the essential truths of the Christian faith . This is

must reading for the faithful and for the unfaithful because it is clear and honest and deeply moving.Leda SanfordCalifornia

"Open Christianity: Home By Another Road" is a fairly interesting, quick read of progressive Christianity. Rev. Jim Burklo hardly has the stature of a Marcus Borg (The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith) or a Bishop Spong (A New Christianity for a New World: Why Traditional Faith is Dying & How a New Faith is Being Born) His book is basically a compilation of sermon notes. It's very user-friendly and Burklo has a cheerful tone.Burklo discusses ecumenism, making life meaningful, sexuality, whether Jesus is the only way to Heaven. He sees his book as a rebuke to fundamentalist Christianity, but it's lacking in rigor. He's not polemical like Spong, but he's kind of lacking in presentation. "Open Christianity" leaves the door open to other possibilities.

The "Reader from San Mateo" with his/her critique of "An Open Road" is EXACTLY the type of "religious" person for whom this book is written. The single most important aspect of this book is that the author draws on scripture to substantiate his position. It is not just his opinion. There is no exclusivism in Christ's teachings. From the very brief insight into the Nativity story at the very beginning to the beautiful vignettes from his urban ministry experiences that begin each chapter, the author very meaningfully tells us that we are all one under God, that God has many faces he shows to many of different faiths, and that Christ came to reveal to us the beauty and strength of the spirit of in all of us.

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