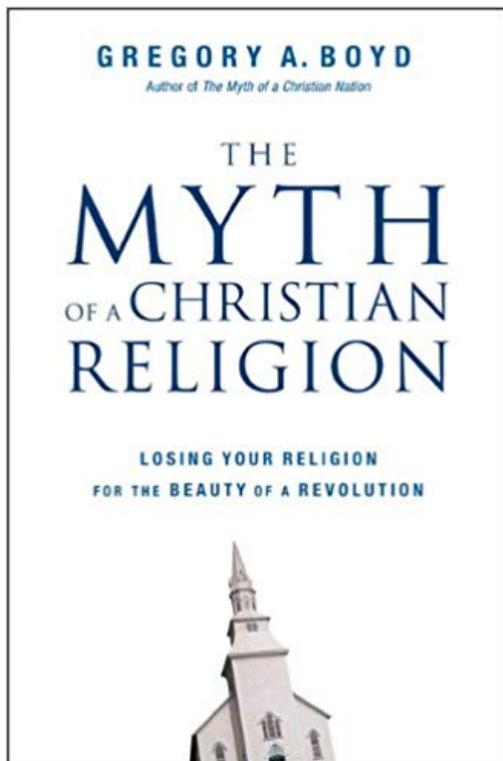


The Myth of a Christian Religion: Losing Your Religion for the Beauty of a Revolution *by* Gregory A. Boyd



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The kingdom of God is a beautiful revolution. Marked by the radical life, love, servanthood, and humility of Jesus, it stands in stark contrast to the values and ways of the world. Regrettably, many who profess to follow Christ have bought into the world's methods, seeking to impose a sort of Christianized ethical kingdom through politics and control. In this illuminating sequel to his bestselling book *The Myth of a Christian Nation*, Dr. Gregory Boyd points us to a better way—a way of seeing and living that is consistent with the gospel of Jesus and his kingdom. Between the extremes of passivity on the one hand and political holy war on the other lies the radical, revolutionary path of imitating Jesus. In twelve areas ranging from racial and social issues to stewardship of the planet, this book will convince and inspire you to live a Christlike life of revolt and beauty—and it will help you attain a practical lifestyle of kingdom impact.



Reviews of the **The Myth of a Christian Religion: Losing Your Religion for the Beauty of a Revolution** by Gregory A. Boyd

Deorro

Edit late 2012: I've become an atheist and renounced Christianity. Interestingly enough, Boyd remains one of my favorite authors, I'd call him a author that points out why the modern church is so far from actual Christianity as explained by new testament authors that he's helped prove to me that god doesn't exist. If that sounds cynical, I understand, but as I went through a horrible excommunication and was totally discarded by my now ex-wife (the Sunday school teacher who indoctrinates kids with stuff each week she doesn't even believe) and the entire staff of the Anaheim Vineyard, I realized that if Jesus actually existed, they couldn't be this cruel and mean, it'd be impossible. In any case, I still recommend Boyd, if only Christians would live the way he describes in his books, the world would be much nicer, but like Gandhi observed this Christianity thing is cool except for all the Christians.

End Edit.

I have only read this book once, and I'll undoubtedly read it again, maybe a couple more times.

Lose your religion, get a relationship.

That about sums it up, so I guess I'm done with this review. Kidding.

I don't know how to put into words what this work brought up inside me, but it did a deep work, I went and did some more study and prayer and talked about it a bit. I read it so fast I know I probably missed a ton of it. But I wanted to give it a strong recommendation and say to people "go read this book".

I love Boyd's work, he really has a way with words and arguments about how to look at scripture and the teaching of Jesus in a straightforward and meaningful way.

Here is a quote I loved about why "religion" isn't the priority:

"To fail to love like Jesus is the worst form of heresy, regardless of how true one's beliefs are."

I was excommunicated and cut off from my old church last year, it was really difficult. At least they didn't stone me to death, although, frankly I considered suicide as a direct result of their "judgement over mercy", so I know what a judgmental and religious spirit can do. It's deathly and cruel.

There have been times in church history that Christians have gone to war, actually killed each other, because they wanted to promote their version of religion on others, the exact opposite of loving your neighbor. Or loving God.

I love Boyd's experiences in community that he relates here in this book, and that's one of the major reason's to be in relationship with Jesus as opposed to being in a "religion", because the nature of Jesus is community, to be in true fellowship with Him is to become a person that can be a true community person. To say it another way: No Little People

One might be thinking, "what did he do to be excommunicated?"; and it doesn't matter. Here is another quote from Boyd:

"The only people excluded from the blessedness of this all-inclusive epoch of divine favor are those who insist that their enemies must be excluded."

Boyd challenges us Christians to love, one of my favorite all time books is his *Repenting of Religion: Turning from Judgment to the Love of God*

Why is it so hard to love and forgive? Because of our hard hearts, indeed, but "religion" and churches that promote "religion" and a religious spirit make loving so much harder, impossible at times.

I am not implying that I'm not the worst of sinners, that's true too. I have always understood that. But Boyd pushes me, challenges me, confronts me, and that's one of the things I love about his writings, he asks the reader to really think things through, to really be pressed with scripture, to really consider what Jesus is actually saying in those "red letter" portions of scripture.

I will end with a quote here from *The Bed of Procrustes: Philosophical and Practical Aphorisms*:

"An idea starts to be interesting when you get scared of taking it to its logical conclusion."

Brariel

Gregory A. Boyd is hardly a new voice in religious circles although he certainly has developed something of a reputation for being on the outside of many circles looking in. Boyd is an evangelical pastor with a distinguished past of academic accomplishments including training with honors at Yale and Princeton Theological Schools. He has served in the past as a professor at Bethel University.

Boyd is probably best known in the theological community as a leading proponent of what is termed 'Open Theism' which seeks to reconcile some difficult elements of the Biblical Text by seeing God as less than all-knowing and all-powerful (although some see this as a voluntary limitation rather than one inherent to God's nature) and therefore God sees the future as a series of possibilities rather than from a position of transcendent knowledge or certainty.

As a result, Greg Boyd hasn't been all that warmly embraced by those elements of "orthodoxy" in Christian evangelicalism that hold to more traditional positions, particularly the reformed and Calvinistic schools.

Starting from this position, it shouldn't be particularly surprising that Boyd has some things to say about the state of 'traditional' Christianity. In fact Boyd has many things to say, and his latest book, 'The Myth of a Christian Religion,' follows nicely on the heels of his prior book, 'The Myth of a Christian Nation,' which addresses the religion comingled with nationalism that is the bread and butter of the so-called Religious Right in the United States.

Some additional background that may be helpful is that Boyd reports in an interview for the New York Times from 2006 that about 20% of his congregation left when he took a stand against explicitly or implicitly endorsing conservative political causes from the pulpit. In that context, this book can be somewhat seen as an apologetic work pointing out the inconsistencies of religion-based nationalism as opposed to the Kingdom of God that Jesus preaches in the Gospels.

As such, Boyd appears strongly aligned with a growing number of authors who address these types of issues in different literary Genres. This reviewer noted marked similarities to some degree with such authors as William P. Young, Wayne Jacobsen, C. Baxter Kruger, Jim Wallis, Malcolm Smith, Frank Viola and George Barna to name a few.

The book is divided into 12 chapters and each stands somewhat alone as an essay addressing the conflicts that exist within the Gospel of the Kingdom as opposed to the popular forms of teaching and belief that have been traditionally accepted, almost without question or critical thought in much of the modern American church. The theme of most of the chapters is one of revolt, or Jesus as the revolutionary; the undeniable point being that much that comfortable Christians and congregations embrace today has little to do with what Jesus taught and the early church modeled. The subjects include Christ and Caesar, Idolatry, Judgment, Religion, Individualism, Nationalism, Violence, Social Oppression, Racism, Poverty and Greed, Environmentalism, Gratuitous Sexuality and Secularism. Wrapped through all of these topics is the supremacy of Christ and the inadequacy of philosophic thought and religious systems to replace a basic relationship with Jesus.

Boyd has a real gift for putting together precisely and succinctly in a pithy and provocative manner the arguments against much of how Christianity has been defined and presented by the evangelical movement over the past 40 years. He does it in a manner however, that while still provocative is not mean-spirited or merely an opposing political ideology. One comes away with the impression that the left, were it more in vogue wouldn't fare much better as the target of Boyd's scrutiny.

The reviewer read the book in the Kindle version and the only real constructive criticism that arises is that the separation of the the Action Guide, which comprises about 25% of the material would have been easier to use if each section had followed the chapter in question.

5 Stars. A very worthy read and in the vein of these books as well.

The Shack

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