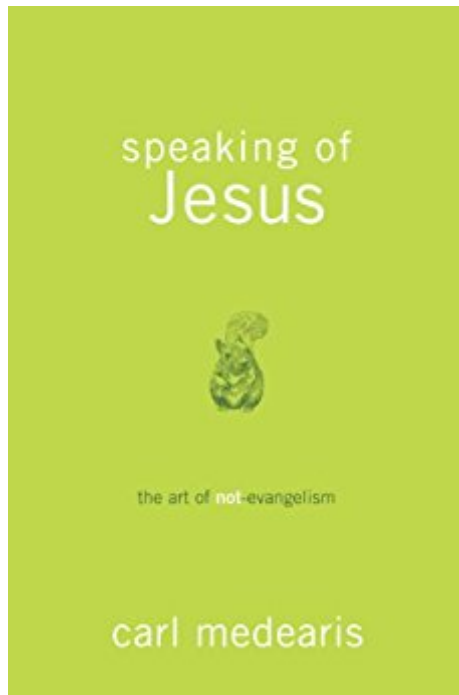




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Speaking Of Jesus: The Art Of Not-Evangelism



Synopsis

Some of us fear moments when we need to defend our theology. Some of us seek them out. But we are seldom ready the way Jesus seemed to be ready. So how do we draw others to God in the midst of these ordinary conversations the way Jesus did? In *Speaking of Jesus*, Carl Medearis draws on his experience of international reconciliation between Muslims and Christians to remind us of the heart of the matter: Jesus. Here he gives us tools, stories, and the foundation we need to move beyond “us” and “them” and simply talk about the One who changes it all. As Carl writes, “While others are explaining and defending various isms and ologies we’re simply pointing people to our friend. The one who uncovers and disarms. Who leads people right to himself. The beginning and the end of the story. A good story indeed.”

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Customer Reviews

Carl Medearis did not write this book to entertain but to break apart some ideas that have become

cemented in our minds with layers of accretion so deep that we no longer even think about them. He starts by building a wall between Christianity and Jesus (and making the Christians pay for it). Christianity is a religion (which most Christians swear allegiance to). Jesus is a person, the Son of God who became a man. Religion vs. person. When we defend the religion, we have to defend all of its baggage (the early church and the formation of the Roman Catholic church, the Crusades, etc.). When we defend Jesus, we find that we don't really need to. All we need to do is point people at Him. There are some issues with the book. The author primarily characterizes Paul as a "murderer" with no background of study of the Old Testament rather than recognizing his upbringing as a well-trained Pharisee and scholar. His putting Christians to death came from his defense of his Jewish faith. He also recommended studying the Gospels (as the primary source material for Jesus' words) as a higher priority than any other parts of the Bible. I'm still mulling that over.

For one thing, it is easy to read this man's words. He has a wonderful sense of humor. He explains things in ways easily understood. He has opened my eyes to limitations with which I have lived. He has an ability to see the trappings we have built around Jesus and His Way all these centuries, and see through it all to the essence of the Gospel and the Way of the Messiah. My outlook is changed, or maybe more accurately strengthened.

This book made me rethink my approach in how I present myself as a Christian man. I too often fell into the trap of needing to defend Christianity. I am a Conservative Fundamentalist (Baptist) Christian and I own all the baggage that the culture heaps on that. However, I do not want to do, or say, anything that causes others to miss knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. This book prompted me to ask "What made me change?" I used to be a godless, amoral, liberal myself. So why did I change? No one forced me. No one defended the faith to me, or won me over with arguments. No. I got to know Jesus, I was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was who he said he was. I was introduced to Jesus by people who were nice to me, and who kept telling me about Him. They kept telling me what Jesus said and what Jesus had done for them. Over time the rest just followed naturally. That process started in June 1972, I was 14 years old then. This book reminded me that I need to be more like Jesus and more like the people that led me to Christ. They did not judge me, nor did they try to win me over with arguments. No, they were just nice to me, they loved me, and they told me about Jesus.

I purchased this book knowing nothing about Carl Medearis. It looked interesting but it's exciting to

Speak about Jesus, God's Son. I must say that these words and stories have affected my approach to people. Just yesterday while cashing out of a popular department store, just in passing time conversation I mentioned I was a follower of Jesus. Her face lit up and she smiled and asked if I loved Jesus. I said yes I do. Then I asked her if she loved Jesus also, then Jewel (not the right name) said she did love yes too. Just that easily I had opened a "friendly" conversation about the Lord Jesus. I'm not sure yet if I can agree whole-heartily with everything written in here yet, but I can see a vast difference in introducing people to Jesus without having to depend "Christianity" and all the terrible things that have been done in its name. I believe every believer should read this book-all of it- without becoming defensive and learn to present Jesus to friends and neighbors rather than Christianity. I wish to thank Carl for this new (to me at least) to sharing my "Friend" with others. Thank you. Lyle would_be_riders@ccomcast.net

This is a very interesting book. I found myself disagreeing on several points in the first few chapters. However, as I continued to read I felt he made a lot of sense. He has a lot of good experience especially with Muslims, but also with homosexuals, agnostics and others who take a dim view of Christianity,

This is probably the best book I have read on living out and sharing my beliefs. In fact since reading this book, I no longer call myself "Christian" (because of all the different negative things that conjures up in so many minds.) I now call myself simply a Follower of Jesus. The precepts of this book are very freeing. Really captures what it means to Follow Jesus, as opposed to Practicing Christianity. I want to send this to all those of my family/friends who are more wrapped up in making sure they get their testimony "just right", rather than in keeping their spiritual eyes and energies focused on Him and their relationships with Him.

Medearis shares insights that many seem to hear, particularly about open relational approaches that help us invite others to get to know Jesus instead of what's wrong with Christianity. He distances himself from self-righteous "traditional evangelists" in a somewhat self-righteous way. While identifying strongly with people's objections to Christians and their approach, I felt at times that he challenges us to embrace Jesus as an evangelist who challenges us to walk with him, learn from Him, and heavily critique traditional religious approaches, experiencing life transformation and change of our beliefs in a more gradual way. So he calls it non-evangelism, rather than care-evangelism and persuasion by more positive influence. Whatever the merits of this approach,

the gospel does not chum up to those who keep Jesus at a distance. It's great that we put the emphasis on getting to know Jesus, but Jesus speaks about the dangers of putting God off, or putting Him off. Part of Medearis's burden is how churches put others off, by expecting them to believe and be just like us...No, that isn't the good news.

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