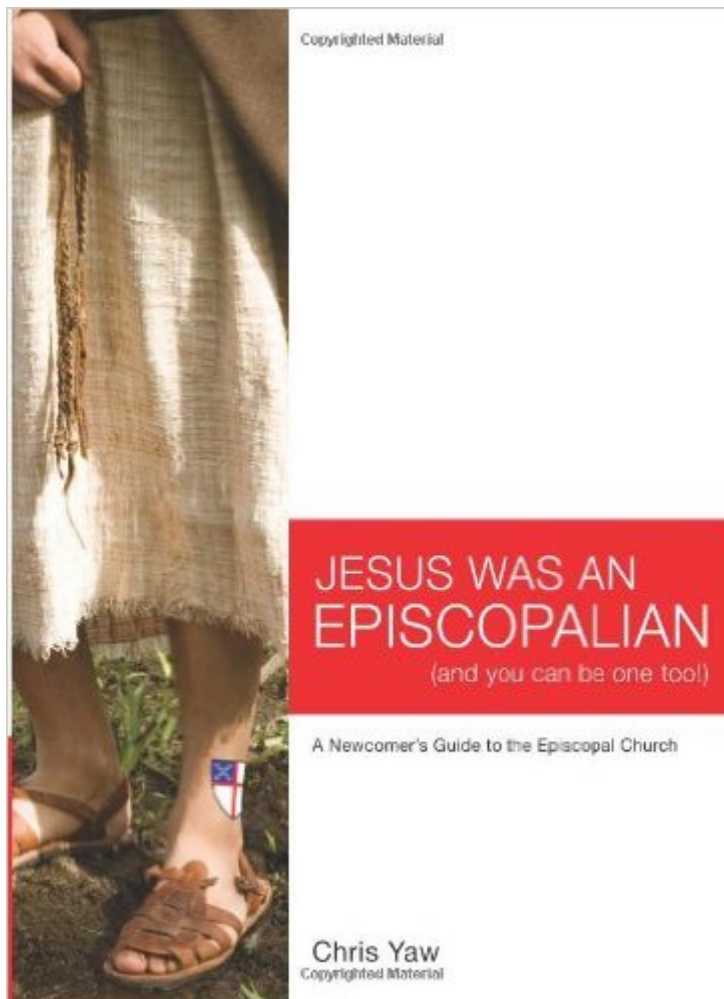


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Jesus Was An Episcopalian (And You Can Be One Too!): A Newcomer's Guide To The Episcopal Church



Synopsis

This light-hearted, interesting and thoroughly engaging book invites newcomers and those looking for a refresher course to take a new look at the Episcopal Church. "It's an amazing time to be an Episcopalian. Our church has a renewed sense of vision and leadership that's all about feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. We're all about standing up for equal rights and the environment. We're all about welcoming everybody to the table, preaching repentance and accepting forgiveness. We hold together modern thought and an ancient faith firmly rooted in Jesus Christ. We offer vital communities that help families, singles - countless people make sense of their lives and their places in the world. Jesus Was an Episcopalian (And You Can Be One Too!) is all about letting the world know who we are and who the Lord is calling us to be. Let's face it, few people today know what an Episcopalian is (be honest - how many people have asked you how to spell it?), yet many of us who have found Christ through this wonderful tradition believe we have an incredible gift to share. That's what this book is about. It's an uplifting, breezy, down-to-earth apologia for a new generation. It's for the church. It's for the world. It's one way for the church to love the world." (Chris Yaw)

Book Information

Paperback: 168 pages

Publisher: LeaderResources (July 28, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1595180001

ISBN-13: 978-1595180001

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (46 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #146,895 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 inÂ Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Episcopalian #32065 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

BOOK REVIEW: JESUS WAS AN EPISCOPALIAN This book, written in a conversational, sometimes whimsical, tone, is intended for inquirers, seekers, and spiritual pilgrims who are looking for, or at least curious about, the possibility of a church community they can trust. Father Chris has a knack for one-liners and off-beat images that speak of venerable truths in unexpected ways. "Episcopalians," he writes, "have an incredibly snappy little suitcase chock full of beliefs, practices,

and traditions that provide a uniquely attractive way of 'doing church' in the new millennium." He does mix metaphors a bit... in another place, he says Episcopalians make use of a "very distinctive old toolbox." But whether it's a toolbox or a suitcase, he writes of the contents in a way that is accurate (in my experience) and attractive (also my experience). Not that he glosses over the dark side of our reality. He acknowledges that, to some observers, the Episcopal Church appears indecisive... "the bland leading the bland," he says. He also is aware of our historic association with the upper crust... "Homeless shelters are a United Nations of religion and Episcopalians are from a very small country." In the end, however, he presents the Episcopal Church as a proactive, self-differentiated community with a healthy, if ironic, sense of its own identity. He includes an anecdote about a parishioner who complains at the church door to a visiting Bishop: " 'Bishop, I didn't like that last hymn.' The cheeky Bishop smiled and said, 'That's OK, we didn't sing it for you.'" This book is written a style that will be familiar to those who do a lot of their reading on the Internet.

The Diocese of Michigan's own Rev. Chris Yaw is the author of this engaging, informative and inspiring book on the Episcopal Church, and what it has to offer the 21st century world. Billed as "A Newcomer's Guide to the Episcopal Church," I believe it has much to offer even the most entrenched "cradle" Episcopalian. For one thing, it does not start our story with Henry VIII and his infamous divorce! It begins with a profound vision of how ordinary people are working to make this world more like God's Kingdom, and how our Episcopal ethos is uniquely suited to this kind of work. Henry VIII does turn up ... more than 100 pages in, after discussion of the current state of religion in America, the value Episcopalians place on using your MIND, the gift of welcome, the celebration of the eucharist, living an ethical life, the Bible ... and wait! There he is ... King Henry VIII, in the chapter on Roots, which really is a quick breeze through Christian history, with the English Reformation as just a bend in that great stream. This is a wonderful, bright, informative book (Bishop Tutu loved it, too!) that is a good reminder of who we are and Whose we are. It would make a great gift for that family member of yours who doesn't quite get it how you ended up in the "Episcopalian" church. (And thanks, Chris, for reminding us that Episcopalian is a noun, and Episcopal is an adjective!) Or for your co-worker who wonders what you are doing over at that church all week. But I'll leave you with Chris's vision of how God sees Episcopalians:--God sees us passionately devoted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.--God sees us willing to fight poverty, disease and injustice.--God sees us as thinkers.--God sees us as accepting and open-minded.

There is one main suggestion that I have for this book: Chris Yaw needs to bring out another

version with the title changed to Jesus Was An Anglican. In the midst of far too much gloomy, inward-looking Anglicanism (sorry - Episcopalianism), this book is a breath of fresh air. A book I would unreservedly hand to someone interested in "Anglican" or "Episcopalian". There are genuinely laugh-out-loud moments. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu writes, "Yes, the Lord has a sense of humor, that is why God created Anglicans! Thank you my friend for this light-hearted and generous invitation to inquirers." "How lovely! It has so many nice quotes from the Prayer Book." Episcopalian after reading the Bible Nowhere does the book descend to the stuffiness that some might associate with Anglicans/Episcopalians. I appreciate its missional starting point - the book begins not from history or internal structures, but with God using us to make a difference in the world. It is honest about the birth pangs into a new context. It is serious about the significance of being allowed (called!) to use our brains. (With its quote that 53% of Americans "believe God created humans in their present form exactly as described in the Bible" - by the way only 1% more than believe in astrology - the use of one's mind in discerning a variety of genres in the Bible may be a difficulty for some). When it does come to history, I'm appreciative that Chris Yaw doesn't start, as too many do, at Henry VIII, but instead starts with the founder of the church being Jesus. Comfortable as I am with the mixed motives and mess of church history, I, for one, have little interest in belonging to a church founded relatively recently by an English king.

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