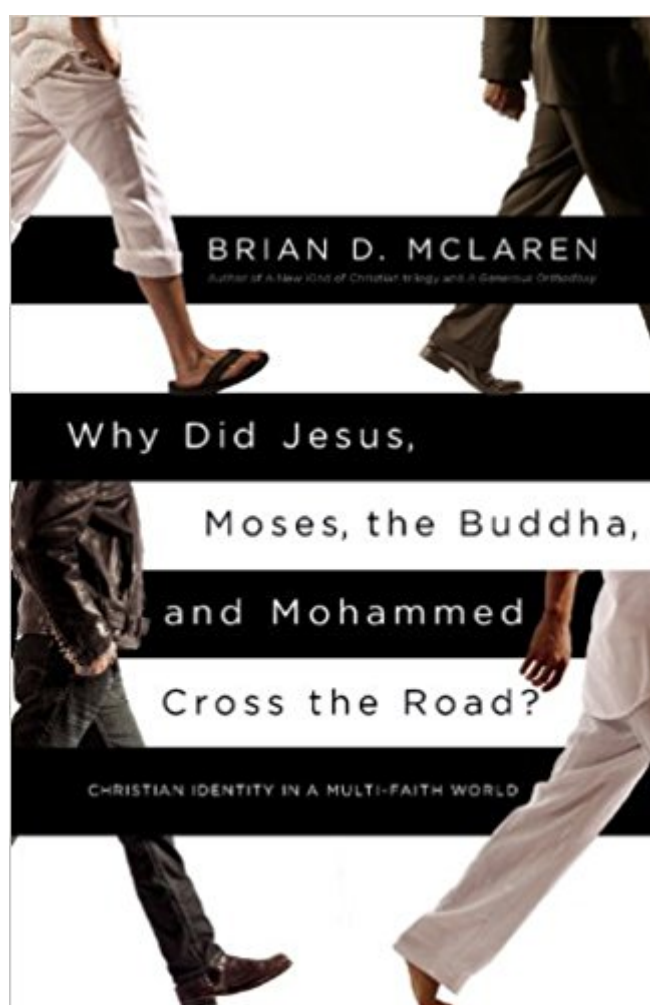


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Why Did Jesus, Moses, The Buddha, And Mohammed Cross The Road?: Christian Identity In A Multi-Faith World



Synopsis

When four religious leaders walk across the road, it's not the beginning of a joke. It's the start of one of the most important conversations in today's world. Can you be a committed Christian without having to condemn or convert people of other faiths? Is it possible to affirm other religious traditions without watering down your own? In his most important book yet, widely acclaimed author and speaker Brian McLaren proposes a new faith alternative, one built on "benevolence and solidarity rather than rivalry and hostility." This way of being Christian is strong but doesn't strong-arm anyone, going beyond mere tolerance to vigorous hospitality toward, interest in, and collaboration with the other. Blending history, narrative, and brilliant insight, McLaren shows readers step-by-step how to reclaim this strong-benevolent faith, challenging us to stop creating barriers in the name of God and learn how affirming other religions can strengthen our commitment to our own. And in doing so, he invites Christians to become more Christ-like than ever before.

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Customer Reviews

McLaren uses the metaphor of great religious leaders crossing the road to converse about key matters of faith. Yet he seems to make the strongest case for fostering tolerance of other religions, while implementing Christian doctrine and maintaining Christian identity, through a single personal story. His brother offers to move some furniture into his new apartment and decides to play a practical joke, flooding the bathroom with several hundred balloons. McLaren must enlist the help of a neighbor boy to invite a virtual parade of children into the apartment to carry away the balloons. The resulting friendship between the Christian author and the Muslim boy provides an essential life

lesson about loving our neighbors and tolerating their differences. McLaren makes additional valid points about the need to accept others and their various faiths while not compromising on Christian identity, but this particular anecdote leaves by far the most lasting impression. For Christians on the fence about whether to accept others and their faiths or to insist that only Christianity can adequately serve, this book provides important insights. --Susan DeGrane --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"...An essential life lesson about loving our neighbors and tolerating their differences...For Christians on the fence about whether to accept others and their faiths or to insist that only Christianity can adequately serve, this book provides important insights."â •Booklist Online"...Worth reading, lively and passionate at translating progressive theology into a popular idiom."â •Publishers Weekly"...Important and extraordinarily timely...a soothing balm for the searing pain of our times..."â •Huffington Post"Provocative...Even those who don't agree will be bettered by engaging its ideas."â •Relevant Magazine"This is a major work in every sense of the word--so major, in fact, that it would be impossible to exaggerate either its importance or its worth to the current conversation about religion and religions."â •Phyllis Tickle, Lecturer on Religion in America and Author of *Emergence Christianity: What it Is, Where it is Going, and Why it Matters*"Helpful, timely, and really, really inspiring."â •Rob Bell, author of *Love Wins*"This is a book to cherish, to read over and over, a book that sheds light and warmth on one of the most difficult questions of our era."â •Eboo Patel, Founder and President, Interfaith Youth Core, Author of *Acts of Faith and Sacred Ground*"McLaren offers a renewed and renewing vision of Christianity that will challenge every reader to go deeper into its core Truth and find radical urgency to befriend all God's children. If you are not afraid of having your viewpoint, identity, and complacency challenged - read this, for Love itself is to be found here!"â •Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church"With wisdom and wit, Brian McLaren courageously explores the contours of his Christian faith in light of his experiences with people from other religious communities. His questions and insights are important contributions to the unfolding interfaith discussion in the United States and beyond."â •Rabbi Or N. Rose, Director, The Center for Global Judaism, Hebrew College

I bought this book because of the unusual title and am glad I did. It teaches us that we need to see the world and our culture in a different light than what we have been taught. Makes me realize it's not me versus them and vice versa.

this book needs to be read by those who'd be reluctant to do so. it does not preach "my way or the highway" but, instead, preaches "Jesus' way - and Moses' and the Buddha's and Mohammad's . . . this will prickle many who want to be members of an exclusive club rather than an atom in a soup bowl. it is not a good book for the arrogant but is for those letting go to be humble. I whole-heartedly recommend it to those who see the way they currently practice their faith as "the only way". My criticism, as with any of the McLaren books I've read, is that he makes his point(s) well before the book is over and, in general, the second half of the book becomes redundant. Still - all good points to pound home. And while McLaren preaches "benevolence" we think even that word comes from a slightly tolerant point of view rather than a open-hearted one. "Love" in fact would be the better replacement in our view.

"To accept and love God, must I betray my neighbor of another religion? To accept and love my neighbor, must I betray the God of my religion?" The past couple of decades have been exceptional when it comes to religious diversity. Christianity is no longer the cultural norm in America. Incidents across the world have highlighted our many differences. How do Christians respond to Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, and so on? Brian McLaren's appropriately titled book *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?* attempts to refocus our goals as followers of Christ. From a purely historical and literary perspective, Jesus is a very interesting character. He spends almost his entire ministry with societal outcasts while specifically avoiding the religious authority of the day. Now fast forward over two thousand years, where do we find the followers of Jesus? Are they more concerned about loving people or staying in line with Christian values? McLaren divides this book into four sections. *The Crisis of Christian Identity*. Identify yourself as a Christian and you will unfortunately be labeled with several negative qualities. Regrettably, most of these perceived qualities have been earned by well-intended but severely misguided Christians. Just like the Pharisees found in the Gospels, Christians today have become more concerned about staying holy and not sinning that we forget to love our brothers and sisters on earth. To be strong Christians, we need humble hearts. To be strong Christians, we need to focus on loving others as an act of loving God. We will definitely receive reprimands from the Christian mainstream but as McLaren reminds us, "Crucifixion happens, not at the hand of others, but Us." *The Doctrinal Challenge* and *The Liturgical Challenge*. These two sections were a bit weak in my opinion. I understand McLaren's desire to refocus our doctrines and liturgy so that we focus more on others and the love that God wants us to show. I liked the areas where I felt like he was correcting doctrinal misunderstandings, but I didn't like how he tried to change the entire focus of a

tradition or sacrament. See chapter on baptism. I certainly don't disagree with his changes or adjustments, I just don't think the changes are the solution. There was not much tie in to the whole theme of the book. The Missional Challenge. The best way to describe the challenge of being a Christian in a multifaith world can be summed up by Gandhi. One, be like Christ. Two, don't tone down your message. Three, center on love. Four, study non-Christian religions. In conclusion, this is a great book on religious diversity and more importantly, loving others. This is the book I think Rob Bell was trying to write when he penned Love Wins. Brian McLaren does a great job writing in simple and straightforward terms. He does not try to throw Greek words at you to prove a theological point. I look forward to reading more from McLaren in the future.

Excellent book for our time when there is so much hatred for people of other faiths. Mr McLaren shows how we can connect with other faiths without diluting our own faith. He shows us how to give compassion to others and to see God at work in other faiths. I have always believed that God shows himself to all in different ways. He does not despise others as they are His children also. Remember the story of Abraham, Sarah and her servant Hagar. Sarah was jealous of Hagar as Ismael was the first born of their family and Isaac the second born. But God did not desert Ismael and Hagar but promised them blessings in the future. We have to look at others and see God in them. This is the way to bring peace to earth by joining together for the good of all.

Interesting story of the author's move from evangelicalism to a more Jesus-oriented and directed faith. Good read for those of fundamentalist tradition. "What's new" for more progressive Christians.

A great and challenging book about spirituality. It challenges the importance of having a clear understanding of what Christianity and spirituality mean, going beyond a rigid and brutal set of beliefs or a watered-down acceptance of anything. While uncomfortable at times to see the damage that can be done in the name of religion, McLaren challenges the reader to listen and search for the value within the individual on another path. The notion that these four "leaders" of spiritual paths and religious beliefs would not only NOT kill each other, but that they could have a painfully real conversation about what religion could actually contribute to the world is essential in breaking the stalemate of arguing over the "right" way to interpret for ourselves and others.

Brian McLaren is a fresh voice among so many time worn repeated phrases. This particular text tackles the problem that many believers deal with. "How do they become more and more dedicated

to Christ, while at the same time not turning into a great big jerk?" We follow a Messiah who was kind to Gentile (Roman) oppressors, to half breed "used women" (Samaritians), prostitutes and blue collar people, and he did so with love for these people. Somehow Jesus and his followers did what eludes so many who call themselves by the name of Christ. Brian's works (including this one) shines the light on a different way to see key theology, liturgy and practice. I hope he continues to deep deep into his spiritual well and share what he finds with the world.

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