

A Bold New Foundation for Christianity: Near-Death and God-Story Experiences Show God Working in Our Lives

Charles R. Bond

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Rich, contemporary, and evolving new understandings of God and Jesus are at the fore of this energetic religious work.

Charles R. Bond's *A Bold New Foundation for Christianity: Near-Death and God-Story Experiences Show God Working in Our Lives* breathes new, vibrant life into contemporary Christianity by theorizing that a transcendent God continues to work in our world in a manner similar to that experienced by Jesus and other biblical personages.

Bond, a scientist by profession as well as a person of faith, believes that Christianity can, and should, be “exciting, vibrant, and meaningful.” He himself undertook a personal odyssey to search for a firmer foundation for Christian life, as opposed to that offered by traditional Christian teachings. This book explores both scriptural and contemporary experiences of holiness, including near-death and out-of-body experiences, mind interventions, and deathbed visions—what it calls “God-stories”—to fill in the void created by moves away from literal biblical interpretation toward more liberal views.

Many accounts of supernatural interventions are reported by everyday people, and those experiences, the book argues, are just as meaningful to contemporary people as they were to those living in the biblical era. That such experiences are so widely reported, it says, supports the case for the existence of a transcendent God that is aware of and at work in the lives of modern people.

Bond, who shares a God-story of his own, declares that the claim of such experiences can serve as the foundation for a new, vitalized Christianity. This logic is well constructed from an open-minded Christian viewpoint, and related arguments are supported with references, including verses of scripture and the writings of other thinkers in the field.

The book does a variety of interesting work, including providing a valuable overview of Christianity's Jewish roots; making clear the role of storytellers in preliterate, prescientific societies; and demonstrating the nature and weaknesses of current versions of Christianity. It effectively argues that humanity is coming closer to recognizing the existence of a transcendent God who is real, lives in our midst, and continues to make God's presence known.

The book's grammar is sometimes lax, though, and the exclamation point is used to excess. There are also several instances of misspelled words and repeated issues with subject-verb agreement. The text itself tends to be repetitive, with frequently cumbersome prose further impeding understanding.

A Bold New Foundation for Christianity points to rich, contemporary, and evolving new understandings of God and Jesus that could bring new energy and commitment to Christians as they work for a better world.

KRISTINE MORRIS (September 20, 2016)

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