

As the Spirit Leads

Jesus' Power

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The challenges of Christian life are explored in this work whose insights are both biographical and theological.

As the Spirit Leads is a work covering a faith journey that speaks to the power of the Christian life, if in an unfocused way.

An unnamed writer recounts her life experiences and her struggle to cling to her Christian faith across four sections, or booklets, written over the years, beginning in 2000. A fifth section consists of a series of blog posts on various spiritual thoughts, particularly eschatology.

It is difficult to determine the focus of the book, which reads like a mix of spiritual memoir, end-times theology, and governmental and societal commentary. The narrator relates that she was born in Trinidad in 1944 to Grenadian parents and was raised in an Anglican household. She recalls entering a rebellious period and giving up her faith when she began following the Labour Party.

Eventually, the narrator leaves her parents and moves to London, where she rediscovers faith after a bad marriage. Despite many people's insistence that she leave her faith behind, she remains steadfast in her convictions.

Vagueness plagues these autobiographical portions, though. No person, including the author, is ever given a name or pseudonym, which interferes with personal connection to their stories.

When speaking of the religious organization in London that helped her find her faith once more, the author refuses to name it, instead opting to constantly refer to it as "the church/charitable organization." Such lack of specificity ends up raising concerns, especially around determining which organizations have been deemed trustworthy.

Each section of the book was written at a different point in the author's life, and there is a lack of overall cohesion. Often, autobiographical portions are repeated, with details added or subtracted. The author relates experiences like attempting to start a business to fund mission efforts back in Grenada, but such threads often go nowhere, devolving to place blame on governments and others. The blog posts feel tacked on and further detract from any sense of a solidifying narrative.

The writing is often stilted and is dogged by issues of grammar and syntax. There is a lack of clarity and organization. For instance, at one point, the author includes the text of a letter she wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury, but there are no markings or divisions to indicate where the letter ends and her thoughts for the book resume.

As the Spirit Leads works to provide some insight into one Christian's life, though its murky structure diminishes its potential impact.

MEAGAN LOGSDON (November 30, 2016)

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