Clarion Review

Body, Mind & Spirit

Back to the Source: The Spiritual Principles of Jesus
Mic Hunter
CreateSpace
978-1-4538-0369-1
Four Stars (out of Five)

As a psychotherapist who frequently works with addicts, the author observes many clients yearning for spiritual growth. In fact, he maintains: “People who know they have to pay attention to their spiritual fitness on a daily basis in order to remain sober take their spirituality much more seriously than those people who think of death and judgment day as an event in the distant future…” The author, who maintains a psychotherapy practice for adults in St. Paul, Minnesota, has authored, co-authored, or edited eight books primarily focused on sexual abuse. Additionally, he has been interviewed by Oprah, CNN, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Here he uses his psychotherapy knowledge and experience to discuss the spirituality of Jesus and address many modern-day issues, such as suffering, war, and homosexuality.

One of the relevant topics he examines is wealth, where he focuses on happiness, greed, and the prosperity gospel, which emerged in the 1990s. He cites Gloria Copeland, a prosperity gospel preacher, who proclaimed, “God knows where the money is, and he knows how to get the money to you.” Questioning this type of religious thought, the author introduces a few horrifying examples of abuse, maintaining that poverty is the best indicator for abuse. He laments, “How is it that in 2003 Americans found $1.6 million dollars to spend on thong underwear for tweens (ages 7-12), but can’t find money to properly fund child abuse prevention or the treatment of victims or offenders?”

The author's therapist background also emerges when he examines Jesus' lessons of compassion and forgiveness, recommending parts of the Alcoholics Anonymous twelve-step program as a model for everyone. Specifically, AA members ask God to help them develop a level of patience and tolerance similar to what they would allow for someone that was physically unhealthy.

The book is arranged well for optimal accessibility. With a detailed table of contents, it allows readers to head directly to a specific area of interest. Each chapter concludes with thought-provoking questions to facilitate personal reflection or group discussion. Readers might welcome more of the author's own photos, which could be labeled more specifically than, for instance, "Detail from a German church." While the cover and production quality are average, the endnotes and bibliography are thorough and useful.

It is exciting to see the author's growth, as he uses his psychotherapy expertise to venture into a good discussion of spirituality. While credentials relating to religion would improve his credibility, readers of many different faiths nonetheless will feel comfortable and engaged while perusing the book.

Beth Hemke Shapiro