ForeWord Reviews

From Stone to Living Word: Letting the Bible Live Again
Debbie Blue
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Stone may be stable, certain, and reliable, but it's ultimately lifeless, cold, and dead. This is Debbie Blue's central idea in her new book, which asserts that the Bible is alive, not static and dead as a stone. While rock solid certainty may be comforting, it also leads to the kind of rigidity which kills off love. For Blue, our relationship with the Bible needs to be like that we have with our loved ones.

Blue, a pastor, author, and speaker, is part of the ministry team at the House of Mercy in St. Paul, Minnesota, an affiliate of the American Baptist Church. She is also a mother of young children, involved in all the entanglements and vicissitudes which family life demands; it is the essence of these family relationships which she draws upon repeatedly in her understanding of God's relationship with mankind, and mankind's relationship with the Bible.

Blue's Bible is radically alive, subject to provisional and vital interpretation, and constantly changing in the face of close engagement. In their eagerness to eradicate contradictions and make order out of chaos, the church fathers sought to reduce the Bible to a mere instruction manual, and Blue wants to change that. In many ways the Bible is more disturbing than stabilizing, but that is the nature of any loving relationship. Love is untidy. Love is powerful. What Blue is arguing for is a revitalization of biblical reading, one that allows multiple and conflicting interpretations, a tolerance of ambiguity, and a willingness to be broken open by the transforming power of a loving relationship with a text that refuses to be contained.

Along the way Blue explores key biblical passages and relates them to current societal ills, such as the politics of division, overarching consumerism, and fear-driven nationalism. Her style is largely conversational, sometimes humorous, and at times even deliberately dumbed down, yet ultimately she is well-read and passionate about her message. *From Stone to Living Word* is a passionate plea for a living relationship with a living text.

Mark Smith