

One Coin Found: How God's Love Stretches to the Margins

Emmy Kegler

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Lutheran priest Emmy Kegler's *One Coin Found* rejects easy notions of Christianity to examine human struggles, identity, and the stories that US Christians tell about who does and doesn't belong in the bailiwick of God's love. Through her own story of developing an "allergic resistance" to religious condemnations of her being, her spiritual coming-of-age mirrors the church's movement, both toward and away from radical love.

Impelled by the unasked questions embedded in the Bible, the book explores their implications with stories of families, churches, and people who failed to love fully. In the midst, Kegler reveals both her own and systemic complicity. She uncovers how interpretation shapes the practice and polity of the church and those affected by it and tugs at the "boundaries of the word" until they're big enough to hold the divine.

Kegler digs into her faith's roots and walks a fine line between calling out and calling in. She builds on sermon structures and delivers a compelling blend of biblical exegesis, personal memoir, and cultural criticism that interpolates individualism with a powerful message of transformational love and community. Queerness proves a powerful lens for this work, and Kegler mines her queer experience to illustrate connections between individuals and larger groups, where collisions of identity have to be resolved.

Kegler notes that she "would not be able to exist within the church if I could not find a way to read the stories of its faith." Her examination of New Testament parables emphasizes the power of stories to tell people who they are in the world. Along the way, the book reclaims the margins as spaces that are filled with intent, where God's love and the stories of marginalized people aren't omissions but "one of those secrets hiding in plain sight."

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (July/August 2019)

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