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Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, & Queer Christians Are Reclaiming Evangelicalism

Deborah Jian Lee
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Rescuing Jesus *highlights and spurs on change that is vital not only to the evangelical church but also to the country.*

Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, and Queer Christians Are Reclaiming Evangelicalism, by Deborah Jian Lee, weaves a tapestry of hope from the stories of evangelicals.

Full of the personal stories of evangelical faith leaders, Lee organizes the book into three parts—conformists, skeptics, and radicals—that track each personal story's progress from hiding to wrestling to standing up in hopeful opposition. They shun simplistic faith for a belief that is complicated and compelling.

The stories feature key themes of the spiritual and political landscape today: justice, racism, sexism, and rights for LGBTQ people. And while the book is organized around narratives of individuals, it's clear, through each one and through Lee's curation, that it's not about the movement of people, it's about the movement of God.

Lee presents her research in a journalistic narrative. Her own background—an open, nonreligious childhood, coming to faith as a teen, and unease with the political connotations of faith in her young-adult years—complements her research without detracting from her optimistic yet objective stance.

Conservative evangelicals will find the stories challenging and enlightening; while their biases and traditions may be challenged, they'll also feel welcome to join in. This is not a message of hard-fast boundary, but of people and cultures rooted in Christ-like hope and willing to change. More progressive evangelicals will see themselves in the stories (and more importantly, people unlike themselves). The lives Lee shares will invigorate their views of themselves and the role of the faith community in public discourse. Those outside the evangelical church will see hope beyond the narrow rhetoric that fills the media—indeed, this is not just the future of the evangelical movement, it's the present.

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MELISSA WUSKE (Winter 2016)

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