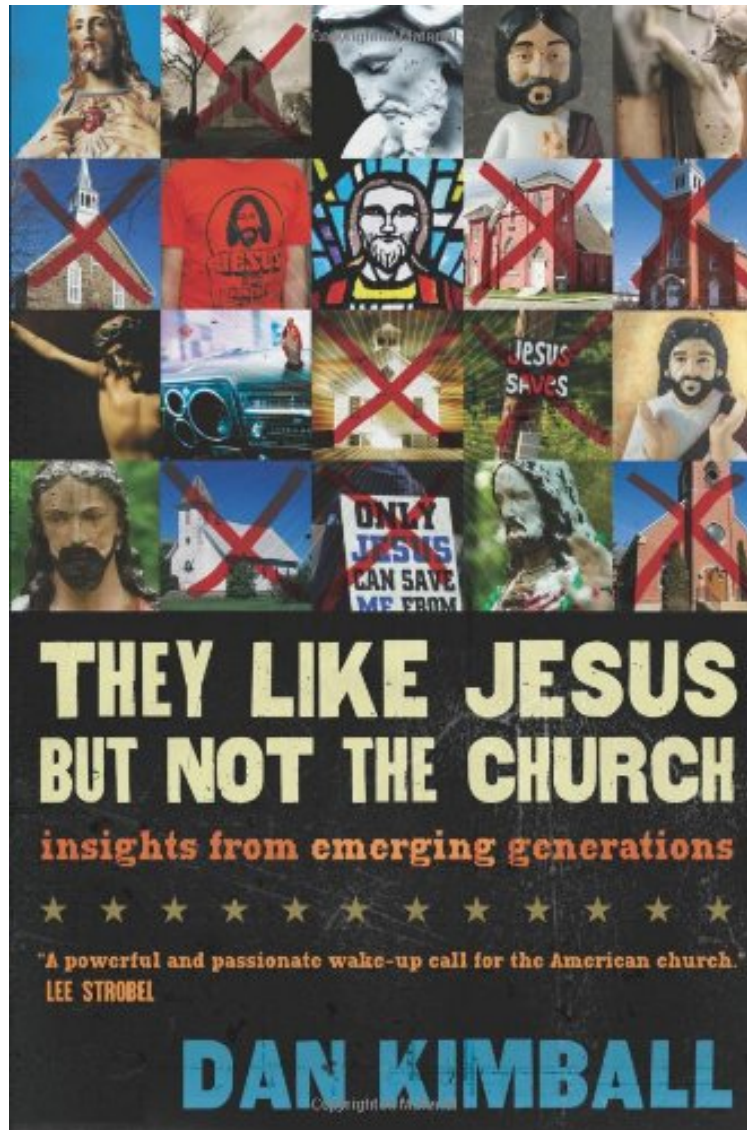


(Free) They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations

They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations

Dan Kimball

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Dan Kimball : They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wake-Up Call to the Church By Herbert Hofer A Review of They

Like Jesus But Not The Church by Dan Kimball (Zondervan, 2007, 271 pp) I found *They Like Jesus But Not the Church* by Dan Kimball to be a helpful complement to the well-known Barna Institute publication *UnChristian* by David Kinneman. The Barna Institute book provides us with statistical analyses of young peoples disconnect from mainline Christianity. Kimball's book provides us with anecdotes that put a human face to the statistics. The focus of *They Like Jesus* is on the same issues that Kinneman identifies. The topics discussed from pp. 73-209 are: The church is an organized religion with a political agenda. The church is judgmental and negative. The church is dominated by males and oppresses females. The church is homophobic. The church arrogantly claims all other religions are wrong. The church is full of fundamentalists who take the whole Bible literally. Kimball's approach to these issues is to interview young people in settings outside the church. His research methodology is more like a focus group than a random sample survey. As the pastor of a growing congregation, Kimball recognized that he had begun to live within the Christian bubble, so he made a concerted effort to open conversations in the public square. One of his major pleas is that Christians converse openly with their unchurched neighbors and colleagues, probably forcing themselves out of their comfort zone as he had to do. He concludes the chapter on *Why I Escaped the Church Office* saying: Are you in the prison of the Christian bubble? Have you become comfortably numb?... Are you planning your escape? People who like Jesus are waiting on the outside to meet you. (p. 48) The phrase people who like Jesus opens up a major theme of the book. He found in his conversations that people were attracted to Jesus, basically seeing him in their own image: The pop culture Jesus is the loving, hypocrite-hating man of peace who taught us not to judge others. (p. 55) At the conclusion of the book, Kimball addresses several criticisms of his approach and evaluation of this pop culture view. He admits that it is grossly inadequate and narrow, but we should celebrate their interest in him and use that as a springboard to engage them in conversations about who he really is. (p. 256) In order to do that, though, we need to be respectful and open. We need to gain peoples trust. We need to see ourselves in a foreign mission field, learning the culture and expressing the call of Christ in ways and terms that the unbelievers can understand. Hear their thinking and understand their hearts, he urges. (p. 260) Kimball gives examples from his own parish where they have tried to organize and present in ways that make outsiders comfortable. His congregation intentionally attempts to incorporate and harness the energy, creativity, and cultural relevance of young people. He tries to avoid the image of the know-it-all preacher by using dialogue in his sermons. He accommodates their desire for personal prayer time by occasionally having only prayer stations instead of corporate worship on Sunday mornings. He explains traditions of the church and its ancient liturgies when he uses them. One plea that Kimball makes relates well to our Lutheran theological tradition. He says that people want to learn about Jesus, and Lutheran theology is deeply Christ-centered. Besides *Solus Christus*, we also have *Sola Scriptura*, and people want to learn what the Bible says. They don't want someone forcing personal opinions or political issues on them. They want to become better people, more Christ-like. As one interviewee put it, it feels more like they are trying to shame you and control you into their way of thinking rather than it being about becoming more like Jesus and a more loving human being. (p. 104) Kimball is an evangelical pastor, so he is at great pains to relate his concerns in ways that do not compromise the faith. In the section on Fundamentalism, he argues that we should all be fundamentalists in the classical sense, basically adhering to the doctrines of the Creeds. However, we should be respectful, humble, and open on other matters. Kimball takes this approach on issues like the role of women in the church, infallibility of Scripture, evolution, homosexuality, other religions, etc. Kimball points out that people today get information on Christianity and other faiths from many different sources. No longer is the church's interpretation of truth the dominant one. We must understand the other viewpoints, and we must address them intelligently. For example, Kimball several times mentions his struggle with the scholarly interpretation that the basic narrative of Jesus birth, life, death, and resurrection is a repetition of ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman myths. Anybody who watches TV or reads general works on religion has seen this viewpoint. Do we know it, and are we able/ready to address it, he asks. Kimball advocates that churches and pastors must become much more intentional and thorough in their teaching ministries. Members must learn how to interpret Scripture in all its complexities, not just gather isolated passages to use as ammunition. They must understand and appreciate other religions, not just dismiss them as demonic. The Bible says it; I believe it; that settles it just won't do anymore. Too many Christians don't know why they believe what they do. (p. 202) They certainly can't then explain or defend it to others. We need to do the hard work of understanding our faith in terms of the questions of our day. Kimball urges that people are hungry for Christians to make sense of the faith. I see attraction and even relief when they hear rational and heartfelt reasons for having some core theological beliefs. (p. 206) Kimball begins the next-to-last chapter with this great question: If you were ever to go to a church or return to a church, and if you could shape it, what would that church look like? (p. 213) He summarizes the view of the outsiders: We want to be taught the Bible to learn about Jesus. Give us the opportunity to ask questions We want a learning environment, not a watered-down lecture. (p. 223) In the eloquent expressions of some interviewees (pp. 224-25): Make church a book club with soul. I want (church) to be like a family where you are all looking out for each other. I wish the pastors and leaders were like baristas or bartenders. I want the church to be diverse and to accept diversity and love diversity. In conclusion, Kimball summarizes his message to the church to offer a humble apology and an informed apologetic. (p. 250) Clearly, the book is a great one for a discussion group. It is written for Christians to discuss together, but one

could also envisage doing it in a more community forum such as a coffee house, neighborhood discussion group, campus ministry, or book club. What a humble, openhearted way for Christians to learn and share. Especially in such a forum, one of the great strengths of the book is the numerous discussion questions at the end of each of the chapters. They are incisive and challenging. A few examples: If you were raised outside of the church., do you think you would like Christians? (p. 35) Does the rising interest in the pop culture Jesus excite you. or do you see it as a threat.? (p. 59) Imagine a stranger visiting. What would (he) observe that would clearly point to Jesus? (p. 95) How do you think people in your town would describe your church?... What are you known for? (p. 113) How would visitors know that your church respects females and gives them a voice in the life of the church? (p. 135) How would the average person in your church explain why they believe Jesus is the only way to salvation? (p. 186) What specific stumbling blocks can you list that prevent people from ever reaching the point of stumbling over the gospel? (p. 244) Do you feel optimistic about those who like Jesus but not the church? (p. 254) Kimball's plea is that we feel optimistic and prepare to engage them intelligently and joyfully. Herb Hoefler, Concordia University 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wow! Compelling and convincing! By Allen Lee Tackett Kimball does a really good job of getting down to the issues, and it was compelling for me to reflect on them as he experienced them. I think his personal approach towards this issue is exactly what was needed. Several other books on the issue that I've read are dry and pretty much like a dictionary: define the terms, give a few examples, and make some predictable application. Kimball talked about real people with real lives, so it was much more grabbing. My only complaint is that he's sometimes theologically inconsistent. I don't particularly want to dig into the issues, but it seemed to me like he wanted traditionalists to bend to accommodate and then told them to not budge in order to maintain their integrity. I understand that there's not really a lot you can do with that, but I thought that it could have been cleared up a little bit. Overall, great book. If you're looking for a first-hand experience into this topic and don't want someone locked up in an ivory tower giving you bland commentary on the subject and not the people involved, this is your book. Yes, yes, and yes. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By Clyde L. I got this book after learning of it from my Pastor. I am working on my Master of Divinity degree and this book has been an excellent resource for my thesis. However, beyond that, it has given me great insight into why the church is in decline. I pray I learn from this and can be the kind of Christian that people want to know, so they may know Jesus through me.

Many people today, especially among emerging generations, don't resonate with the church and organized Christianity. Some are leaving the church and others were never part of the church in the first place. Sometimes it's because of misperceptions about the church. Yet often they are still spiritually open and fascinated with Jesus. This is a ministry resource book exploring six of the most common objects and misunderstandings emerging generations have about the church and Christianity. The objections come from conversations and interviews the church has had with unchurched twenty and thirty-somethings at coffee houses. Each chapter raises the objection using a conversational approach, provides the biblical answers to that objection, gives examples of how churches are addressing this objection, and concludes with follow-through projection suggestions, discussion questions, and resource listings.

My father taught me that a problem well defined is half solved. It would be foolish to be in ministry to emerging generations without carefully studying this book -- Josh McDowell, author and speaker I recommend this book especially to those who think the emergent church movement is a phase. Something is wrong when people like Jesus but not the church, Jesus body. Our job is to do something about it. -- Sarah Sumner Dan helps us understand issues we must address regarding the church and emerging generations. This book will help you strategize your journey out of the institution and into the mainstream of the movement. -- Reggie McNeal A tough-minded, clear-sighted look at authentic Christian living in the twenty-first century. -- Leonard Sweet Every frustrated, tired, and burned-out pastor in America needs to read this book. Dan Kimball provides hope and insight for all who love Jesus and wish the church were more like God intended. -- Jules Glanzer If you like Jesus and the church, you need to read this book. It will give you a window into the heart of a world that desperately needs Jesus and a new vision of his bride, the church. -- Kevin G. Harney Thoughtfully addresses some of the most complex issues facing the American church today. It provokes serious thinking about our responses to the hard questions about life, faith, and Jesus. -- Linda Stanley Dan Kimball both points out our blind spots and gives us a clear and compelling road map for reengaging people with the good news of the gospel. This is an important book, and a great one. -- Chap Clark, Ph.D. I really appreciate Dan Kimball's passion. It's important to listen to and wrestle with him in order to develop ministry models that proclaim an ancient message through relevant and flexible methods. -- Efreem Smith Couldn't put it down! Confronting and alarming but hopeful, this book presents real dialog with young critics of the church and offers positive suggestions for moving the church forward. -- Bryce Jessup The good news is that Dan is right. More people are open to Jesus, giving us an opportunity to shed our skins of tired traditions and return to our call, a Christlike nature. -- Alan Nelson With insight, gentleness, and an unswerving commitment to the wisdom of the past, Dan Kimball shows us what we don't want to see but must if we care about the Great Commission in the twenty-first century. -- Gregory Kouss I felt like I was sitting in a coffeehouse with Dan, having a three-hour conversation about things my heart yearned to explore. This

book is beyond timely. Carry it with you into the future. -- Rudy Carrasco Dan brings authenticity and sensitivity to the discussion by engaging people who have come to trust him as their friend. This is Jesus way of engagement. He didnt talk about people; he conversed with them. -- Eddie Gibbs While he might not use the term, Dan Kimball is a gifted missionary-evangelist. Thoroughly Christological and missional. -- Lon Allison Church leaders dare not ignore the wisdom and perspective of this book. -- Nancy Beach This is a sobering read, but as Dan promises, its ultimately a hopeful one too. We ignore those who like Jesus but not the church at our own peril. -- Tony Jones Treats the citizens of emerging culture as people God loves rather than as enemies, targets, or customers. Essential reading for anyone serious about doing mission in emerging culture. -- Earl Creps, PhD, Dmin A wonderful bridge between the real-world orthopraxy of the emerging church and the we want to learn and understand posture of all healthy church leaders. Dan clearly has his finger on the pulse of twentysomethings outside the church. -- Mark Oestreicher God is speaking to his church, and hes using those who dont even attend one to be his spokespeople. Listen up! Thanks to Kimball, new voices are directing the church toward renewal and spiritual growth. -- Michael Frost, Author My father taught me that a problem well defined is half solved. It would be foolish to be in ministry to emerging generations without carefully studying this book. -- Josh McDowell, Author What a hopeful reminder that Jesus is not as far away from most unchurched people as church leaders think. If every church leader will heed Dans message, emerging generations will find faith in the real Jesus through his real church. -- John Burke, Author From the Publisher An overview of the six most common objections emerging generations have with church and Christianity along with the biblical answers to these objections and examples of how churches are facing this challenge.