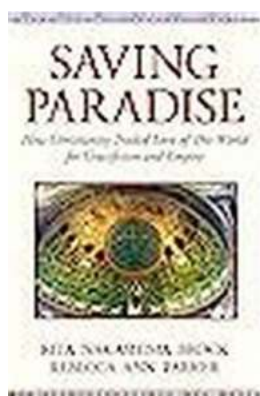


How Christianity Traded Love Of This World For Crucifixion And Empire

In the early days of Christianity, the new faith sought to bring about a revolution of love, offering a fresh perspective on the teachings of Jesus. However, as time went on, the religion gradually shifted its focus, valuing the concept of crucifixion and empire above all else. This transformation has had a profound impact on the way Christians understand and interact with the world around them.

One of the key turning points in this shift occurred with the rise of the Roman Empire. At the time, Christianity was still a relatively small and persecuted faith. However, when Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in the fourth century, the religion suddenly found itself in a position of power.

This newfound position of power led to a series of monumental changes within the Christian faith. The religion, once centered on love, began to prioritize control and dominance. The Roman Catholic Church, now the official religion of the state, became a powerful institution, wielding both political and religious authority.



Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire

by Rita Nakashima Brock (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 5640 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 576 pages



The concept of crucifixion, once a symbol of sacrifice and redemption, became a tool of control. Crucifixion was no longer seen as an act of divine love, but rather as a method for suppressing dissent and maintaining dominance. This shift was reflected in the art and imagery associated with Christianity, which often depicted Jesus on the cross as a reminder of the consequences of challenging authority.

As the church grew in power, it began to accumulate wealth and land. The pursuit of empire became intertwined with the teachings of the faith. Missionaries were sent out to convert non-believers, not out of love and compassion, but with a desire to expand the church's influence. The focus became on converting individuals to Christianity rather than showing them the love and grace of God.

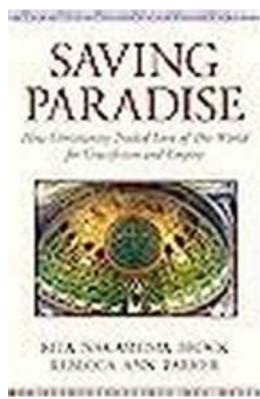
This shift from love to crucifixion and empire has had lasting effects on Christianity. Today, Christians often find themselves torn between the teachings of Jesus and the institutionalized structures of the church. The emphasis on power and control has led to a distorted understanding of what it means to follow Christ.

However, there is hope for a return to the original message of love. In recent years, there has been a growing movement within Christianity to reclaim the essence of Jesus' teachings. This movement seeks to challenge the dominant narratives within the church and to prioritize love and compassion over power and control.

By focusing on love, Christians can once again embody the radical message of Jesus. They can strive to create a world that reflects the values of the kingdom of God - a world characterized by justice, peace, and compassion. This requires a

willingness to challenge the structures of power and to acknowledge the ways in which Christianity has been co-opted by empire.

Ultimately, the transformation of Christianity from a faith rooted in love to one dominated by crucifixion and empire is a cautionary tale. It serves as a reminder of the dangers of intertwining religion and power. However, it also offers hope for a return to the true essence of Christianity - a faith centered on love for one another and love for the world.



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One of Publishers Weekly's Best Books of the Year

A fascinating theological study of how early Christianity's message of love and community has evolved into one of punishment and empire

During their first millennium, Christians filled their sanctuaries with images of Christ as a living presence—as a shepherd, teacher, healer, or an enthroned god. He is serene and surrounded by lush scenes, depictions of this world as

paradise. Yet once he appeared as crucified, dying was virtually all Jesus seemed able to do, and paradise disappeared from the earth.

Saving Paradise turns a fascinating new lens on Christianity, from its first centuries to the present day, asking how its early vision of beauty evolved into a vision of torture, and what changes in society and theology marked that evolution. It also retrieves, for today, a life-affirming Christianity that the world sorely needs.



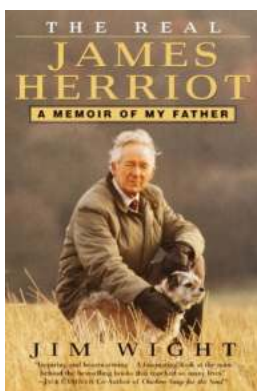
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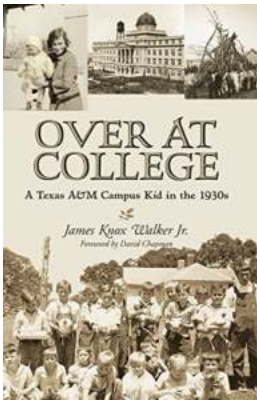
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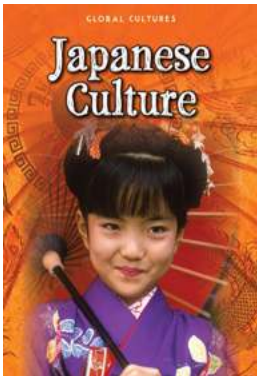
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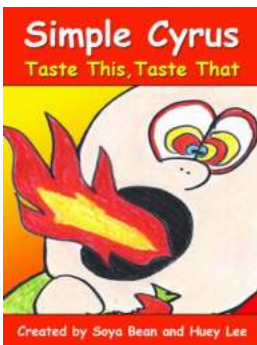
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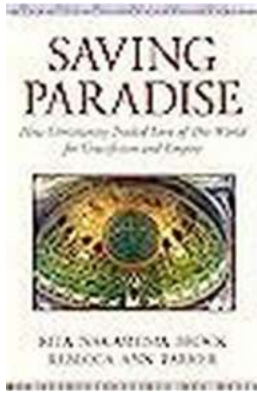
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