

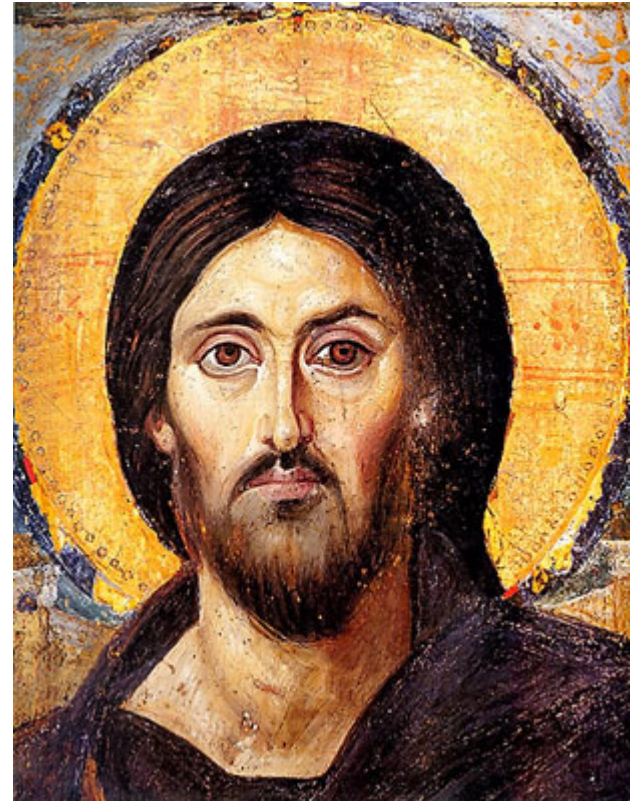
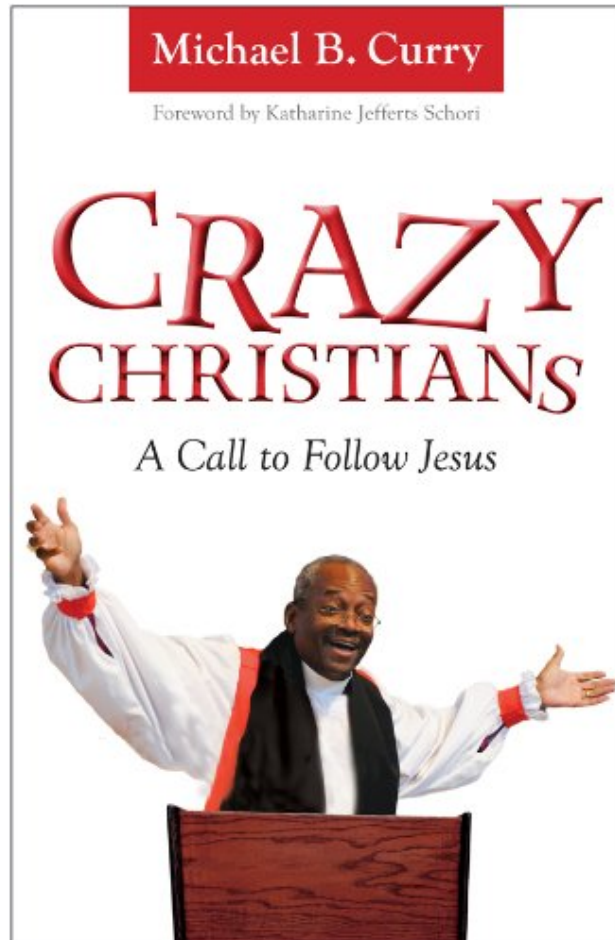


WHY BE A CHRISTIAN?

The “Jesus Movement” Today and in Context

Dr. Kathleen Staudt, Christ Church
Georgetown, December 18

What does it mean to be “followers of Jesus?” in our time?



“Following Jesus” v. “Worshipping Him

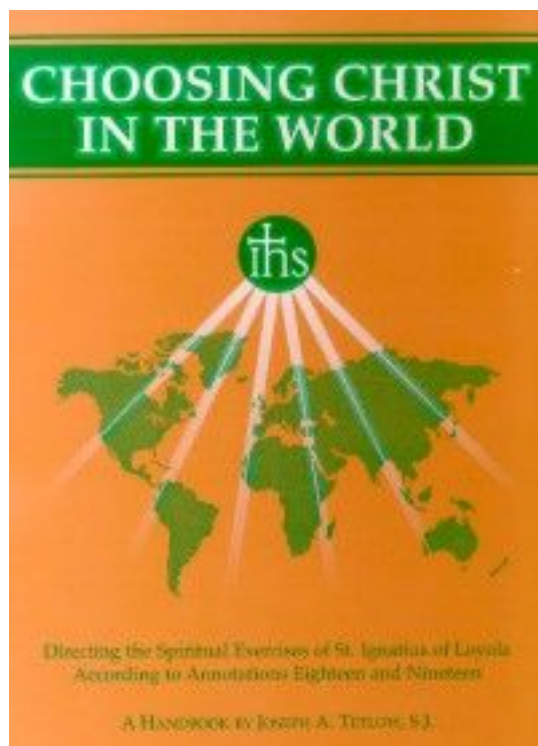


The Jesus of history

- Charismatic healer
- Sage
- Revitalization movement founder
- Prophet to a Social World in Crisis
- Challenge to imperial order



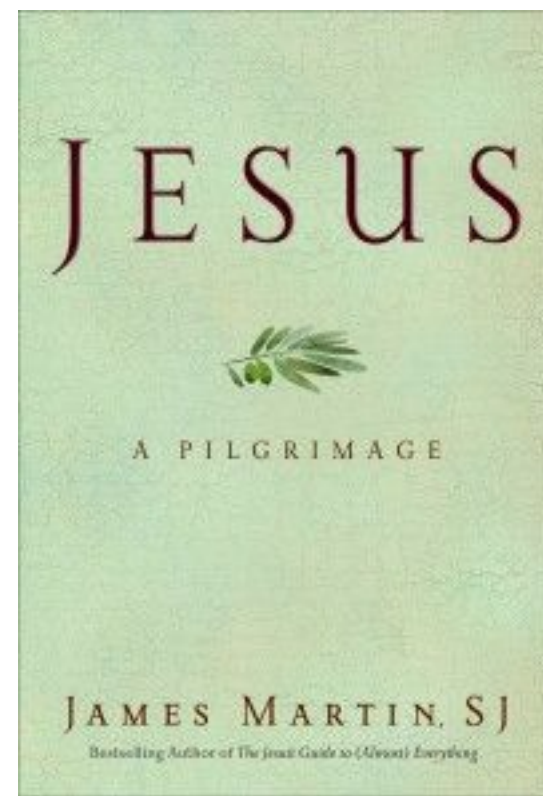
Walking with Jesus: Jesuit Spirituality



Jesuit Spirituality:

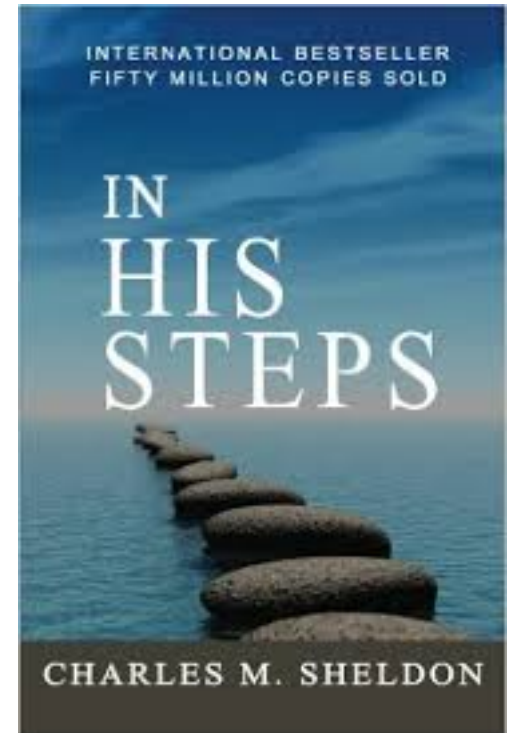
Relationship with Jesus at the Core of discipleship & Discernment

Knowing Jesus leads to discerning action in the world, participation in God's ongoing work of redemption



Following “In His Steps” – the Social Gospel Movement

- Spread gospel by example, progressive social reform: Reject preaching based on fear of damnation, substitutionary atonement – instead follow Jesus in caring for the poor and those in need
- Follow “In His Steps”: ask “What Would Jesus do?”





“Jesus People” and the counterculture of 1960s-70s

Revivalist/restorationist: Communal life

Influence of charismatic movement and evangelicalism

Across the political spectrum: Sojourners, Church of the Savior, Campus Crusade for Christ as enduring legacies of the movement. But mostly white middle class

Jesus-experience filtered through “premillennialist” and “postmillennialist” lenses. Songs:

“I wish We’d All Been Ready”

“They’ll Know we are Christians by our Love”

“My Sweet Lord”

Excursus: “Premillennialist & Postmillennialist

• Premillennialist

- We are living in the “end times” when Satan rules and the world has grown so evil that Christ will be coming soon to judge the world.
- The elect will be “taken up” and the others “left behind.” This is “good news”.
- Because Jesus is coming back soon, the disciple’s main job is to convert as many as possible to Christian belief so as to save souls from damnation: Focus is personal conversion and salvation. (“Evangelical” mission).

Postmillennialist

- The promised reign of God has begun with the coming of Jesus
- Salvation is already taken care of: the main calling of Christians is to know and follow Jesus, make disciples, and participate in the work of healing and reconciliation wherever they may be.
- The spiritual power of the Living Christ sustains Christians in this mission.

“Moral Therapeutic Deism”

- A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth.
- God wants people to be good, nice and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
- *The central goal of life is to be happy and feel good about oneself*
- God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem
- Good people go to heaven when they die.

vs Following Jesus

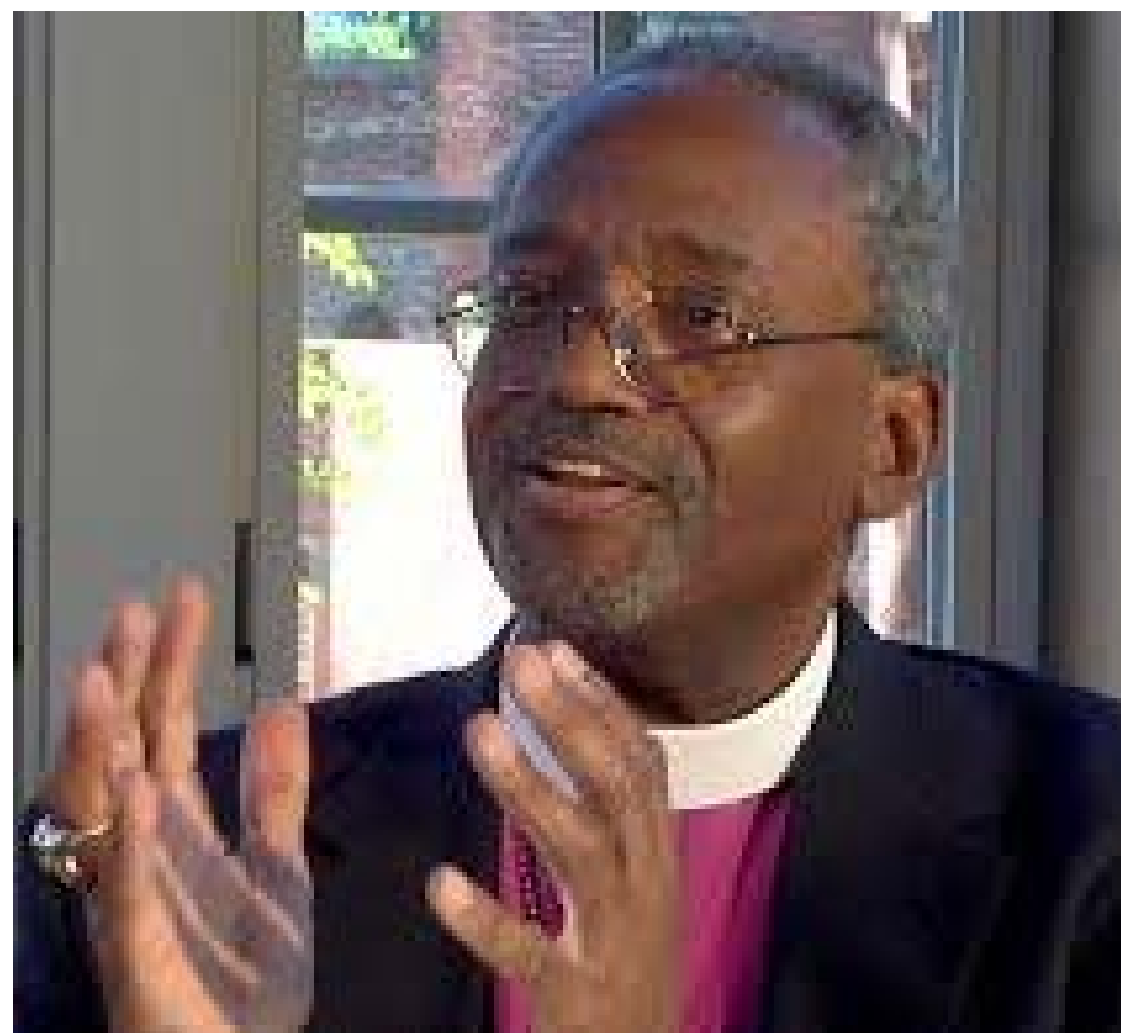
We belong to something larger: Revelation in Scripture and the STORY told in our tradition is “go to” resource –”

“Follow me”, “Believe in me” (i.e. “Trust me”) (*pisteuo*)

Embraces hope: Belovedness; death to resurrection; recognizing sin leads to reconciliation; obedience (listening) leads to transformation. Conversion beyond shame.

Participation, however imperfectly in something larger than ourselves: in what God is doing. God involved with us and we with God – ongoing growth, renewal, hope. A “Way” rather than an arrival. A Story that contains our story.

Michael Curry – “Crazy Christians” and a New Jesus Movement in Our Time



- Early Christians “turning the world upside down”
- Following Jesus is about participating in God’s dream for the world. Almost always counter-cultural.
- “Follow, Not Worship” in Episcopalian context



Walking with Jesus: African American & Liberationist Spirituality

“I want Jesus to walk with me. . . .

He lives, he lives. Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me, along life's narrow way
He lives, he lives, salvation to impart
You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.

“Jesus-centered” spirituality & Radical Welcome: The Church of Our Saviour



My testimony I – “This Happened”



My testimony II –A Gospel Oopportunity



The “Jesus Movement” & the Public Square: My pilgrimage

