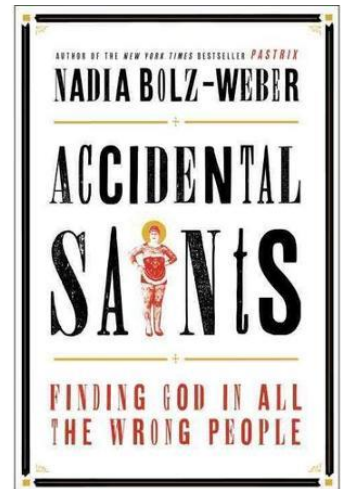


Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People Nadia Bolz-Weber (2015)

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This guide is provided as a free resource from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. We encourage you to use it with a reading group when discussing Nadia Bolz-Weber's Accidental Saints. You can hear more from Nadia June 10-11, 2016, at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She'll be joined by Rachel Held Evans and together they'll reflect on what it means to "be church." Learn more at www.pts.edu/Being_Church.



From your perspective, what is this book about? How would you describe it to a friend? What if you could only use one word?

Let's explore the theology here:

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about God?

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about Jesus (Christology)?

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about humans (anthropology)?

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about church (ecclesiology)?

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about church (worship, liturgy, sacraments)?

- What does Bolz-Weber have to say about grace?

Think about one accidental saint in your life.

- What claim has (does) she/he stake on you?
- What value do saints add to life and the Christian journey?

Bolz-Weber talks about discovering a potential saint (Alma White), only to figure out that she was less than perfect.

- Do you require perfection from your saints?
- What are the costs (for them, for you, for others) of requiring such perfection?

Bolz-Weber shares the following wisdom from a friend: "Church isn't perfect. It's practice" (179).

- What would it mean, for your community, to live into that reality? What would change?

Speaking of practice (and piety and belief), how do you think about individual vs. collective faith?

- Do Bolz-Weber's stories invite you think any differently?

Discuss Bolz-Weber's notion of Advent lists: "They'd be like Christmas lists, but instead of listing things we want Santa to bring us, we could write down things we want Christ to break in and take from us" (59).

- What would be on your list?
- What would you like to place on your community's list?

Bolz-Weber reminds us that God didn't enter a perfect, Normal-Rockwell-painting sort of world: "God slipped into the vulnerability of skin and entered our violent and disturbing world" (77).

- Does her assertion that Christmas should be interpreted "as much about comfort and joy as it is about how messed up our world really is" change anything about how you'll view the coming three weeks?