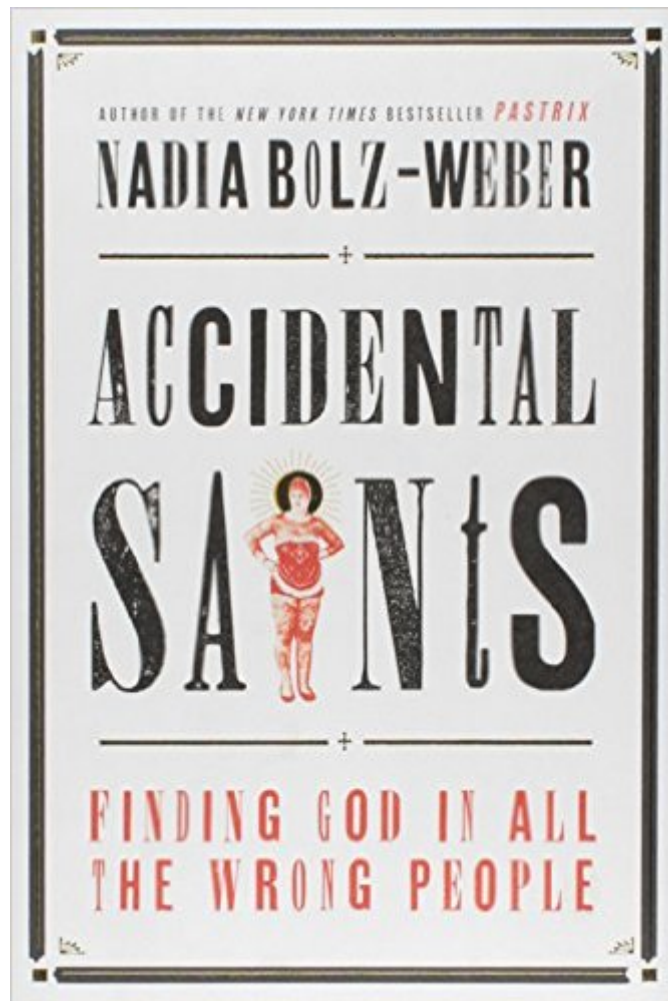


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Accidental Saints: Finding God In All The Wrong People



Synopsis

New York Times Bestseller | One of NPR's Best Books of 2015
What if that person you've been trying to avoid is your best shot at grace today? And what if that's the point? In *Accidental Saints*, New York Times best-selling author Nadia Bolz-Weber invites readers into a surprising encounter with what she calls "a religious but not-so-spiritual life." Tattooed, angry and profane, this former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a felonious Bishop and a gun-toting member of the NRA. As she lives and worships alongside these "accidental saints," Nadia is swept into first-hand encounters with grace—a gift that feels to her less like being wrapped in a warm blanket and more like being hit with a blunt instrument. But by this grace, people are transformed in ways they couldn't have been on their own. In a time when many have rightly become disillusioned with Christianity, *Accidental Saints* demonstrates what happens when ordinary people share bread and wine, struggle with scripture together, and tell each other the truth about their real lives. This unforgettable account of their faltering steps toward wholeness will ring true for believer and skeptic alike. Told in Nadia's trademark confessional style, *Accidental Saints* is the stunning next work from one of today's most important religious voices.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really wasn't sure what to expect from this book. I googled the pastor, Nadia Bolz - Weber, before I chose the book and when I saw her tattoos and muscles, I thought this was going to be a book that

was kind of like the churches I sometimes see where they play hard rock music and that kind of thing (not that there's anything wrong with those, it's just what I thought.) But, the "Accidental Saints" Nadia writes about are not just people who look different, but it's about just average people who are pretty much just like everyone else, only maybe they just don't feel like they are good enough to go to church because they don't have nice clothes to wear, or they have problems that make them feel like they aren't as good as everyone else. The biggest message in this book for me is where she wrote that when Jesus was here "He spent his time with people for whom life was not easy. And there amid those who were suffering, he was the embodiment of perfect love." She said in a talk to some young people that God is a "God who has always used imperfect people". So, this book for me is kind of the opposite of what I think of as church, where everyone is dressed nicely and have so many good things happening to them all the time they are always saying how blessed they are. This book is about real people. Along with the powerful and helpful messages all throughout the book, you will find that Nadia is super funny. She tells a funny story about being in Costco with her husband when she was very pregnant with one of her kids and one of the women who hand out samples said to them "You fellas want to try some clam chowder?"

It is nice to read works of faith by those whose views would be deemed unconventional by some. How can you get any more unconventional than a pastor who is described on the back of her own book as a former stand-up comic who is tattooed, angry and profane. Interestingly, I found most of what she had to say to be in line with mainstream Christian thought and found her humility to be saint like. One of the reasons I picked up this book was because of the quote by Fr. Richard Rohr, on this page, in which he says Pastor Nadia thinks like he does only she says what she is thinking so much better and with more humor, living examples, and a conviction that will convict you. I have read a few books by Fr. Rohr and I do see a similarity in that he and Pastor Nadia both seek and find holiness in people and incidents that are often overlooked and ignored by many clergy and many people. This book is broken into 19 chapters most of which are focused on incidents and people who are part of her congregation the "House For All Saints And Sinners". She discusses the Blessed Virgin Mary, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and the Church Year. All these are almost Orthodox and while she puts her own unique spin on each story I found her views to be very much in line with mainstream Christian thinking. She takes on serious subjects like the killings at Sandy Hook Elementary School and how church was never meant to be a place for escapism. Church needs to be a place where the evil in this world is discussed. I can't agree more. Pastor Nadia admits how early in her tenure at her church she was taken aback by how many

“socially awkward people” showed up at her church and how the church would never have a chance if these were the people who showed up.

Accidental Saints is like reading a combination of David Sedaris, Anne Lamott and Jesus Calling. Bolz-Weber has an interesting, entertaining and at times inspiring voice as she writes something of a spiritual memoir here. It does revolve around the author; she is confessional and reflective. At times, she is self-deprecating and humble; while, at other times, she is bold and assertive. Bolz-Weber writes as a Christian pastor, so the book is inherently pastoral, theological and spiritual. She shares meaningful stories and is most appealing when being brutally honest and vulnerable in her own communications and relationships with God and others. Her interactions with people are strikingly moving in myriad ways. As she opens up her story to readers, readers are naturally led to examine themselves and their own spiritual and relational stories. As a pastor myself, I found that Bolz-Weber’s honest descriptions about thoughts, attitudes and questioning as a pastor resonated deeply with me. In her words, I could hear so many of my own struggles verbalized: “Am I doing this right?” “Should I be feeling this way?” “God help!” She ultimately expresses the deep desire shared by so many pastors to share the love of Jesus in the best way to the most people. Conversely, we don’t want to lead people astray, shut people out of the kingdom, or weigh them down with unnecessary burdens. In this line of writing, I think this is a helpful book to pastors to get a grip on our desperation to serve God and be the pastor the people need. She writes that she likes to say with her church that “we are religious and not spiritual.” I love that!

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