

writing for my life (1)

For 20 years, I've been writing for my life.
Here are four things I've learned.

1. Writing has been part of my discovery process -
an opportunity to be a scout entering new territory.

I have started with questions, not answers.

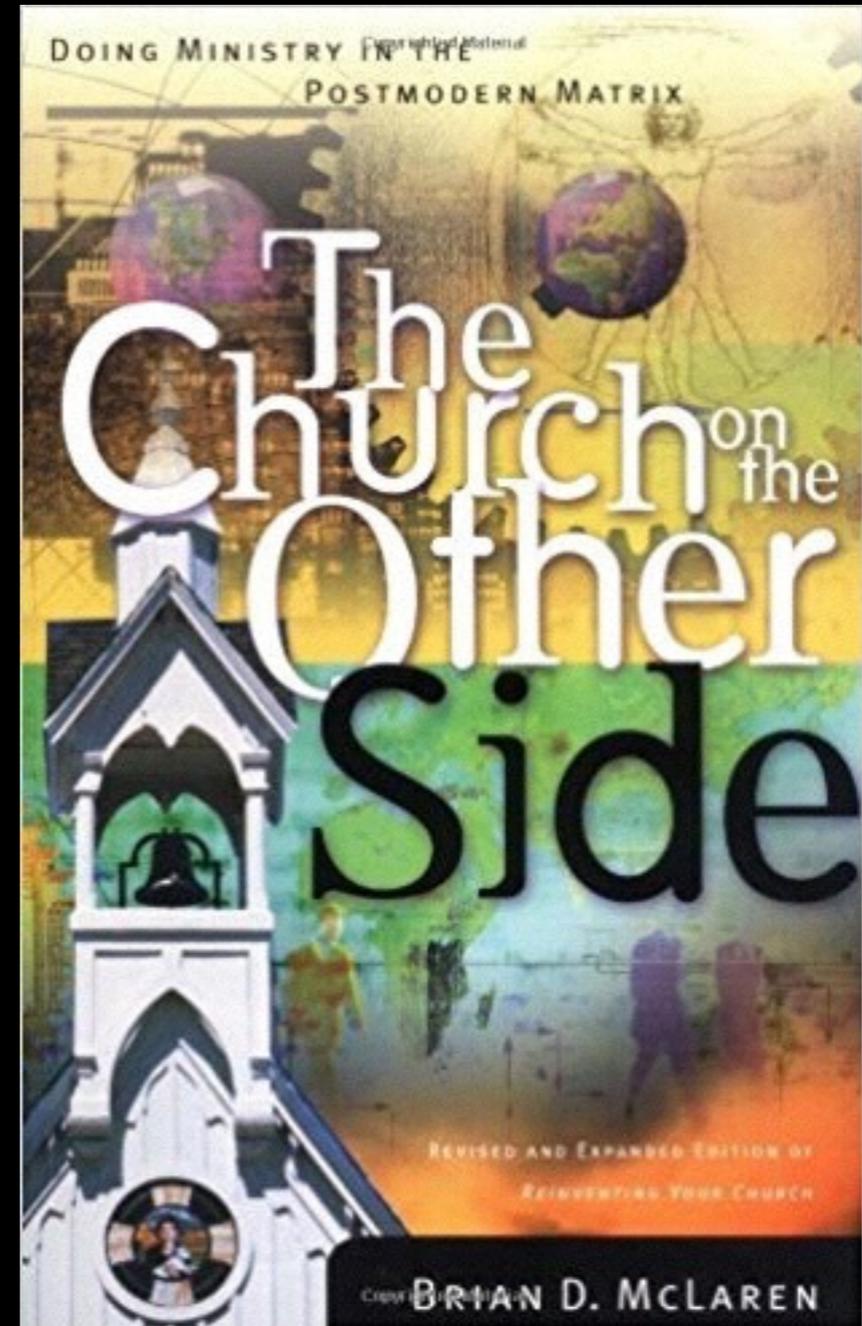
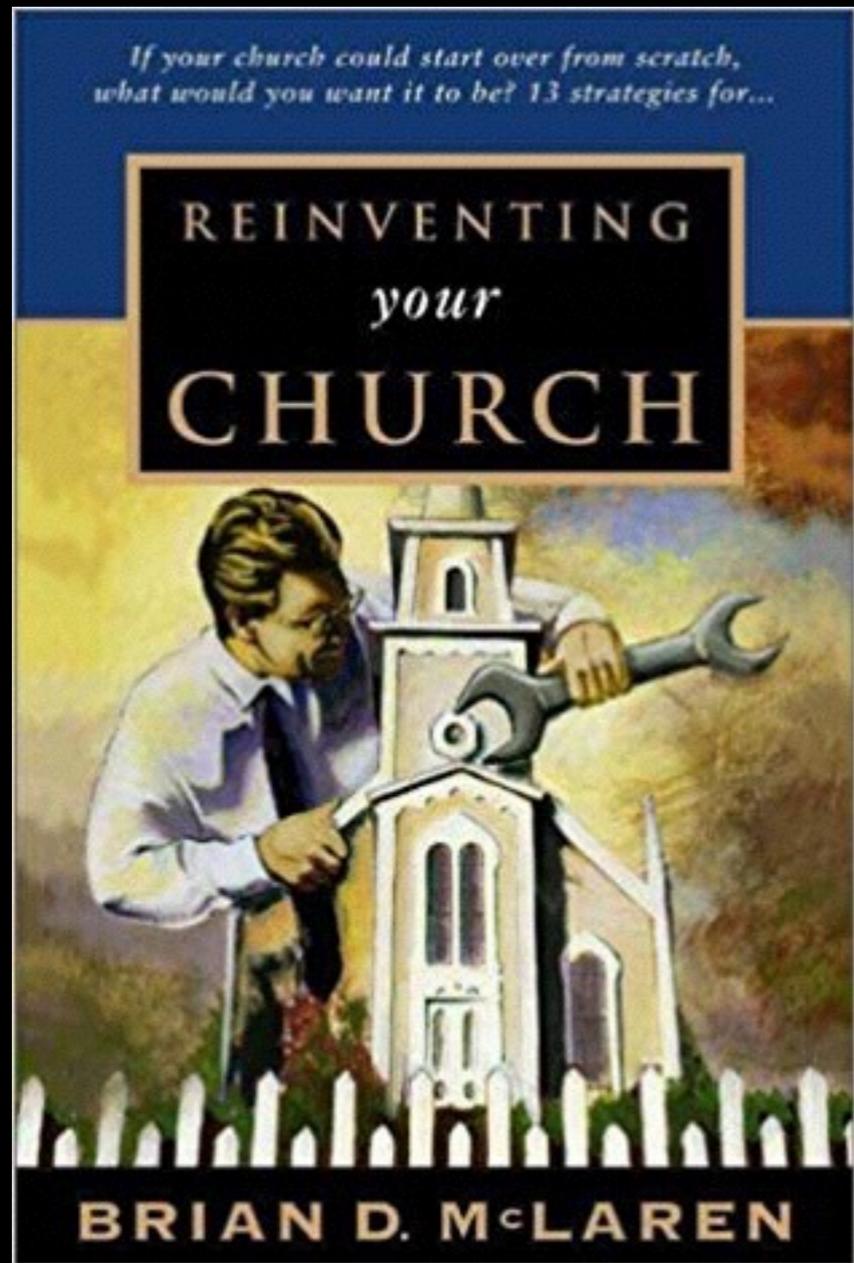
I have started with soul-sickness, not a cure.

I have started with problems, not solutions.

I have started with mysteries, not certainties.

Words ... are the blanket we throw upon the invisible to make it visible.

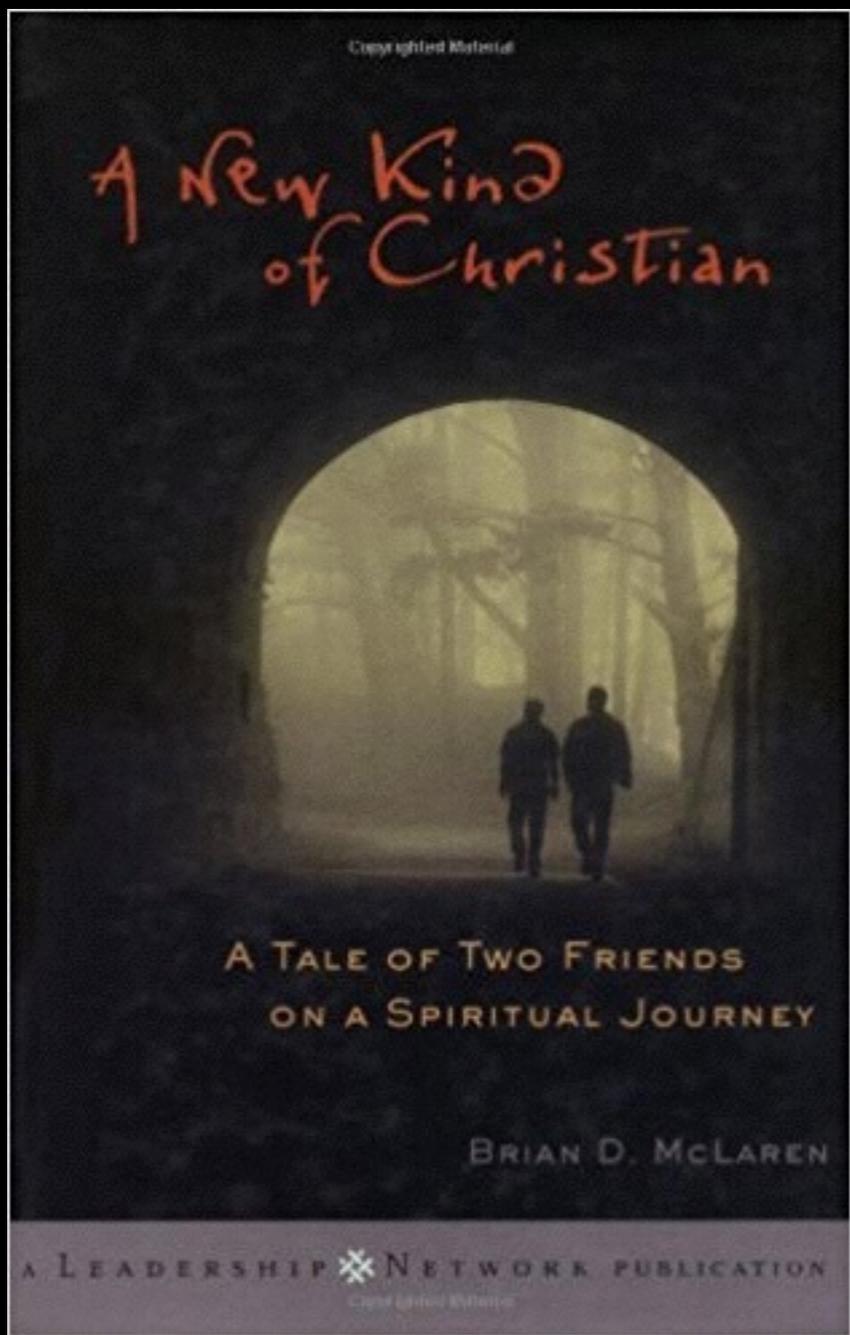
- Nick Cave (Australian singer/songwriter)



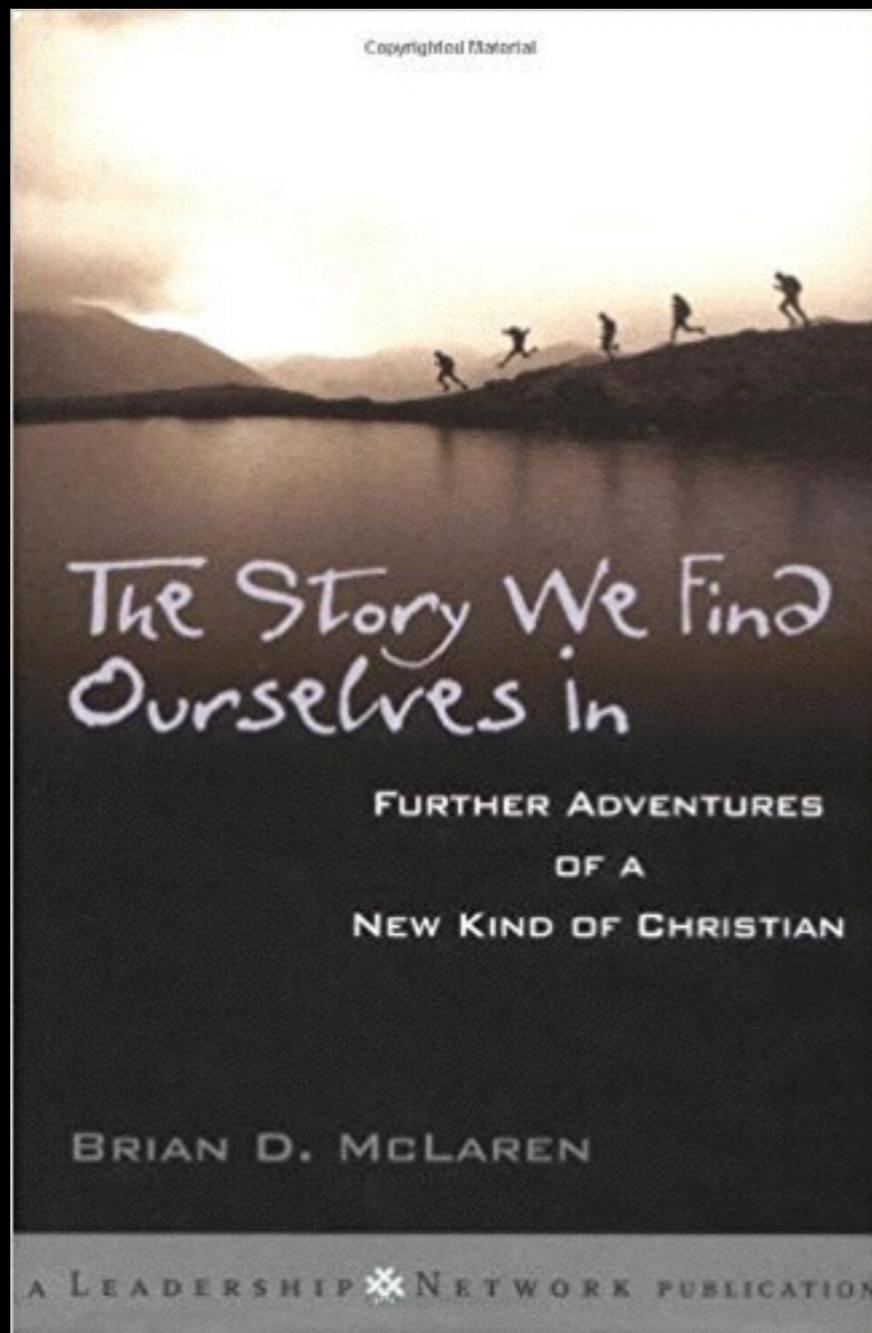
March 1, 1998

A reviewer:

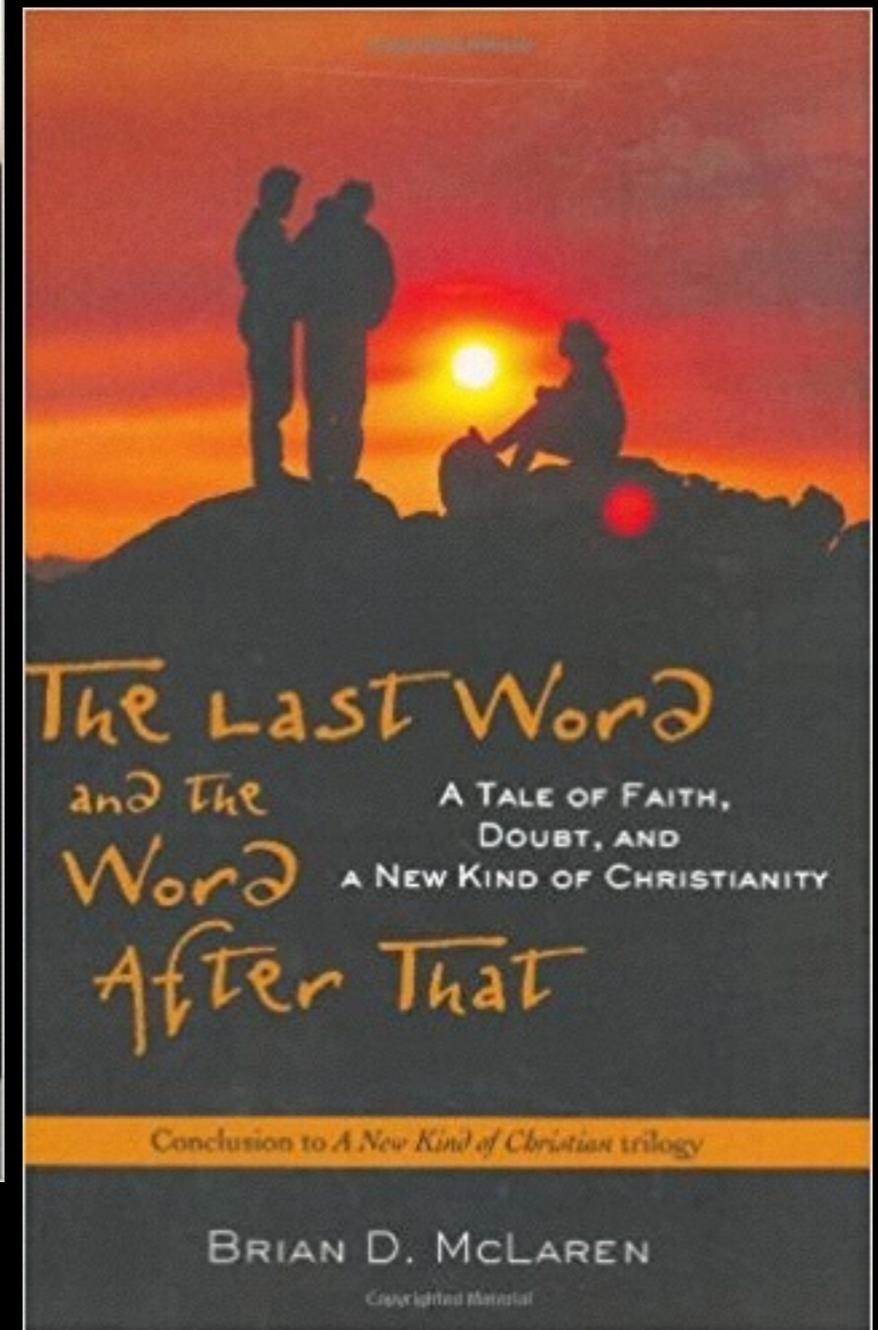
If McLaren means what he says about postmodernism,
he should be writing fiction, poetry, drama, screenplays.



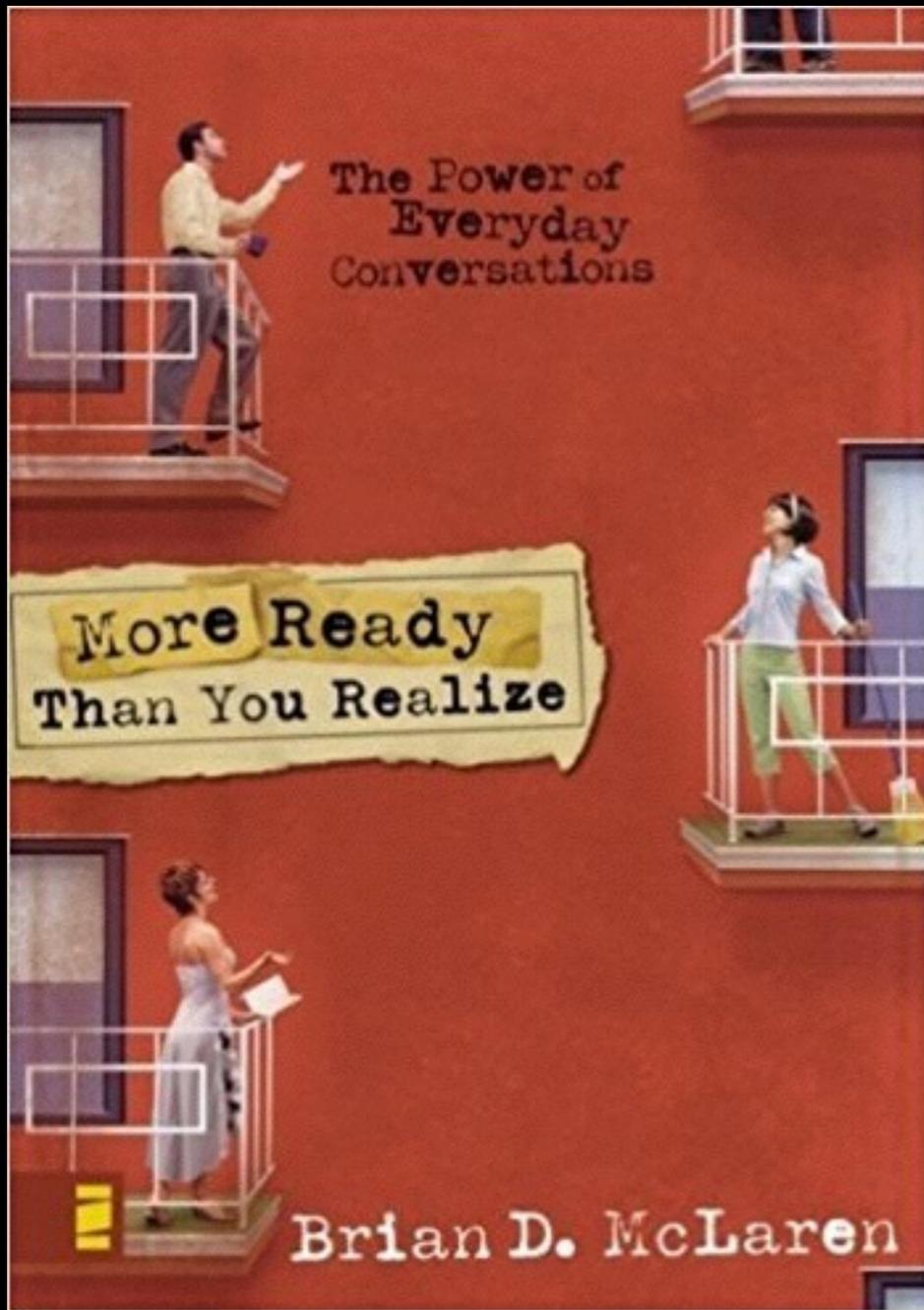
2001



2003



2005



a conversation as portal into new ways
of seeing

2002

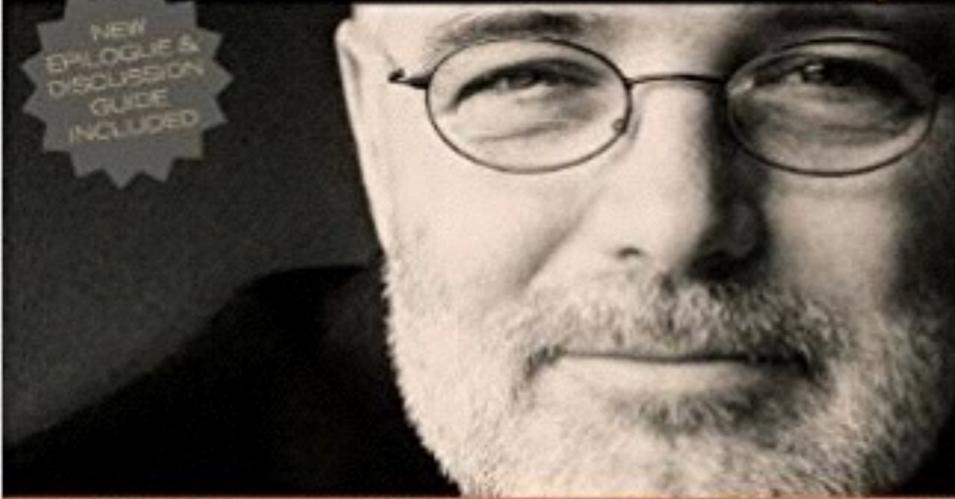
A reviewer:

McLaren is nothing more than warmed-over Raushenbush.

BRIAN D. McLAREN

a Generous Orthodoxy

NEW
EPILOGUE &
DISCUSSION
GUIDE
INCLUDED



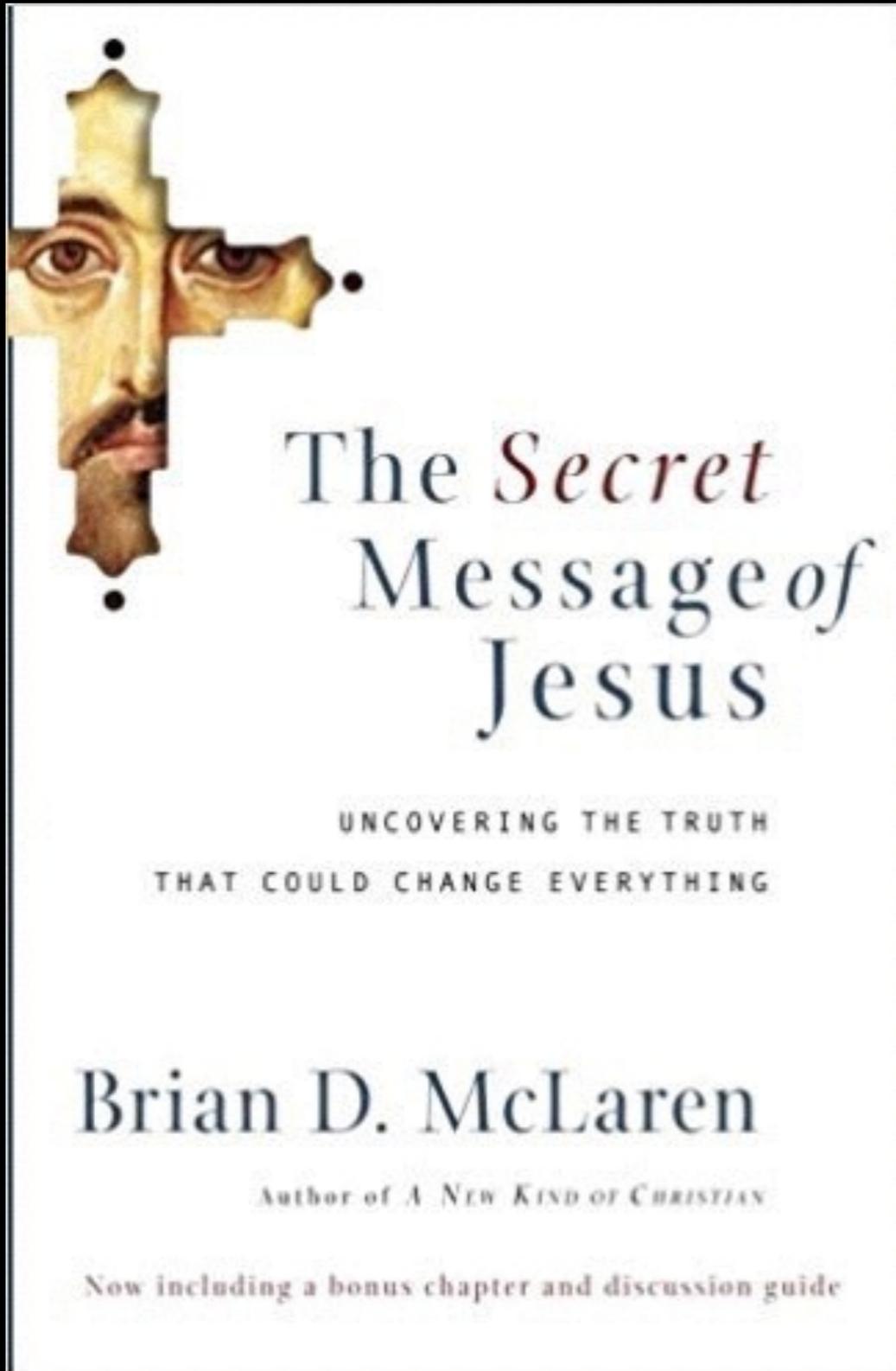
FOREWORDS BY PHYLLIS TICKLE AND JOHN R. FRANKE

WHY I AM A missional + evangelical +
post/protestant + liberal/conservative +
mystical/poetic + biblical +
charismatic/contemplative +
fundamentalist/calvinist + anabaptist/anglican +
methodist + catholic + green + incarnational +
depressed-yet-hopeful + emergent +
unfinished CHRISTIAN

ZONDERVAN

2004

A reviewer:
McLaren is a revisionist.



The Secret
Message of
Jesus

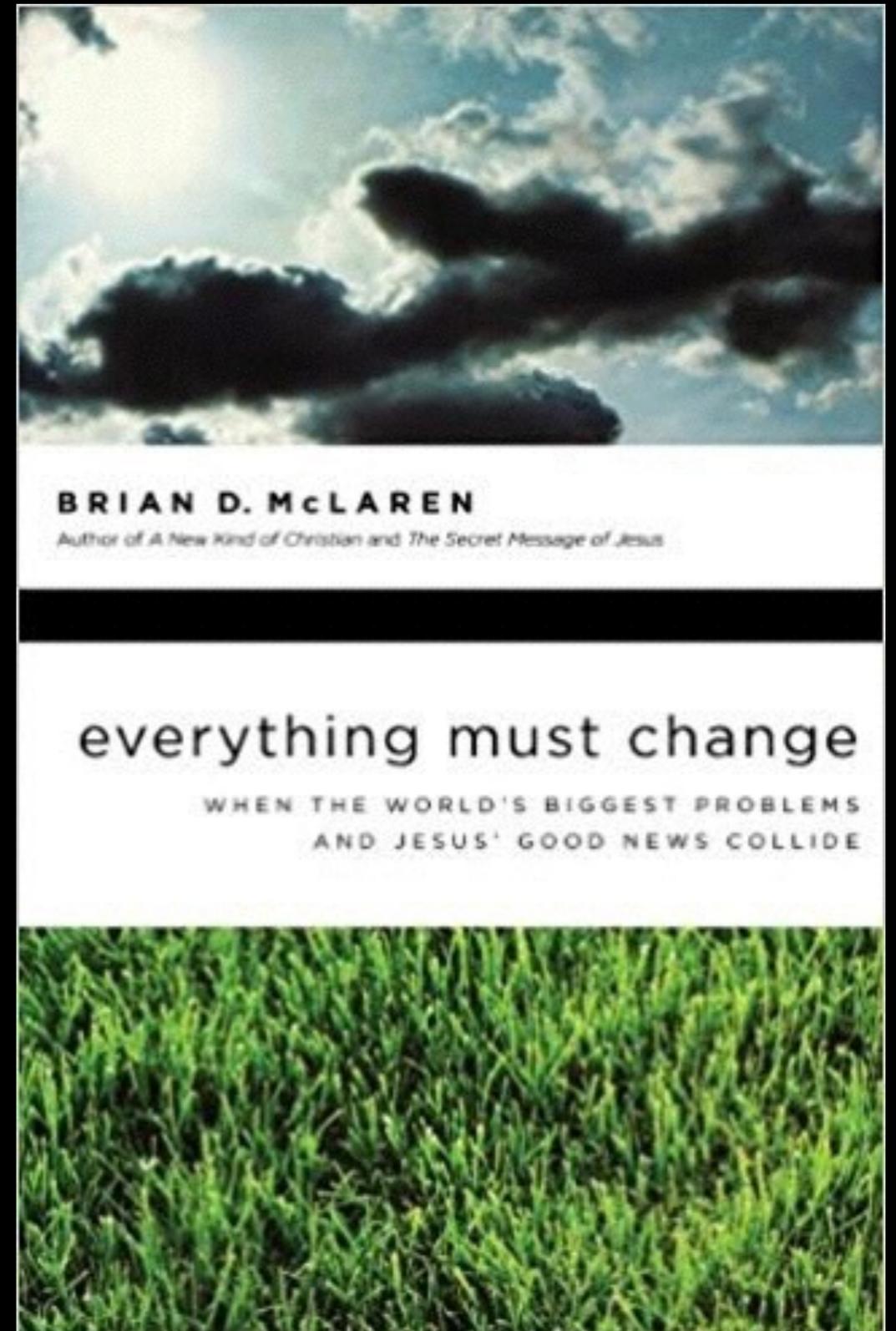
UNCOVERING THE TRUTH
THAT COULD CHANGE EVERYTHING

Brian D. McLaren

Author of A NEW KIND OF CHRISTIAN

Now including a bonus chapter and discussion guide

2006



BRIAN D. McLAREN

Author of A New Kind of Christian and The Secret Message of Jesus

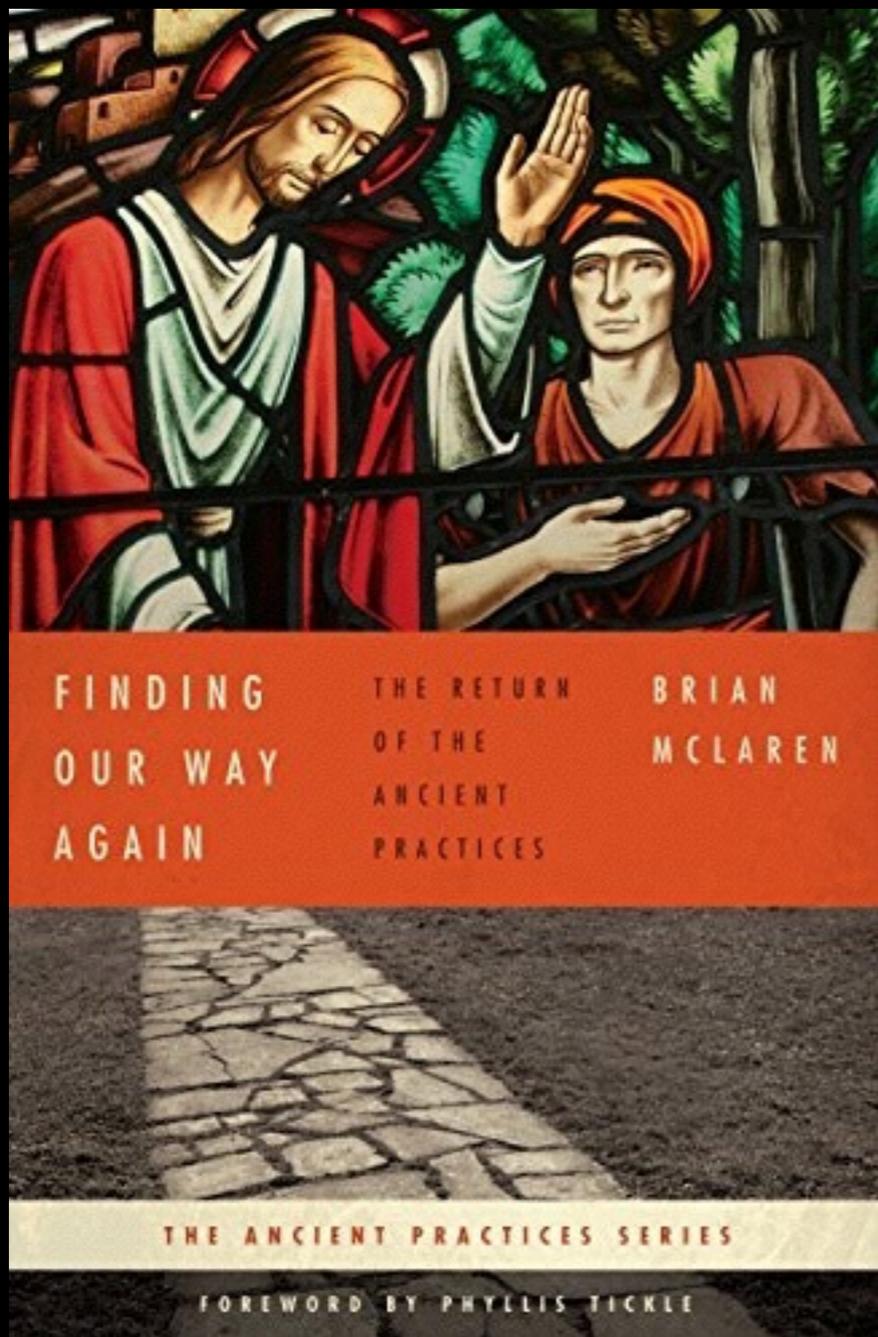
everything must change

WHEN THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PROBLEMS
AND JESUS' GOOD NEWS COLLIDE

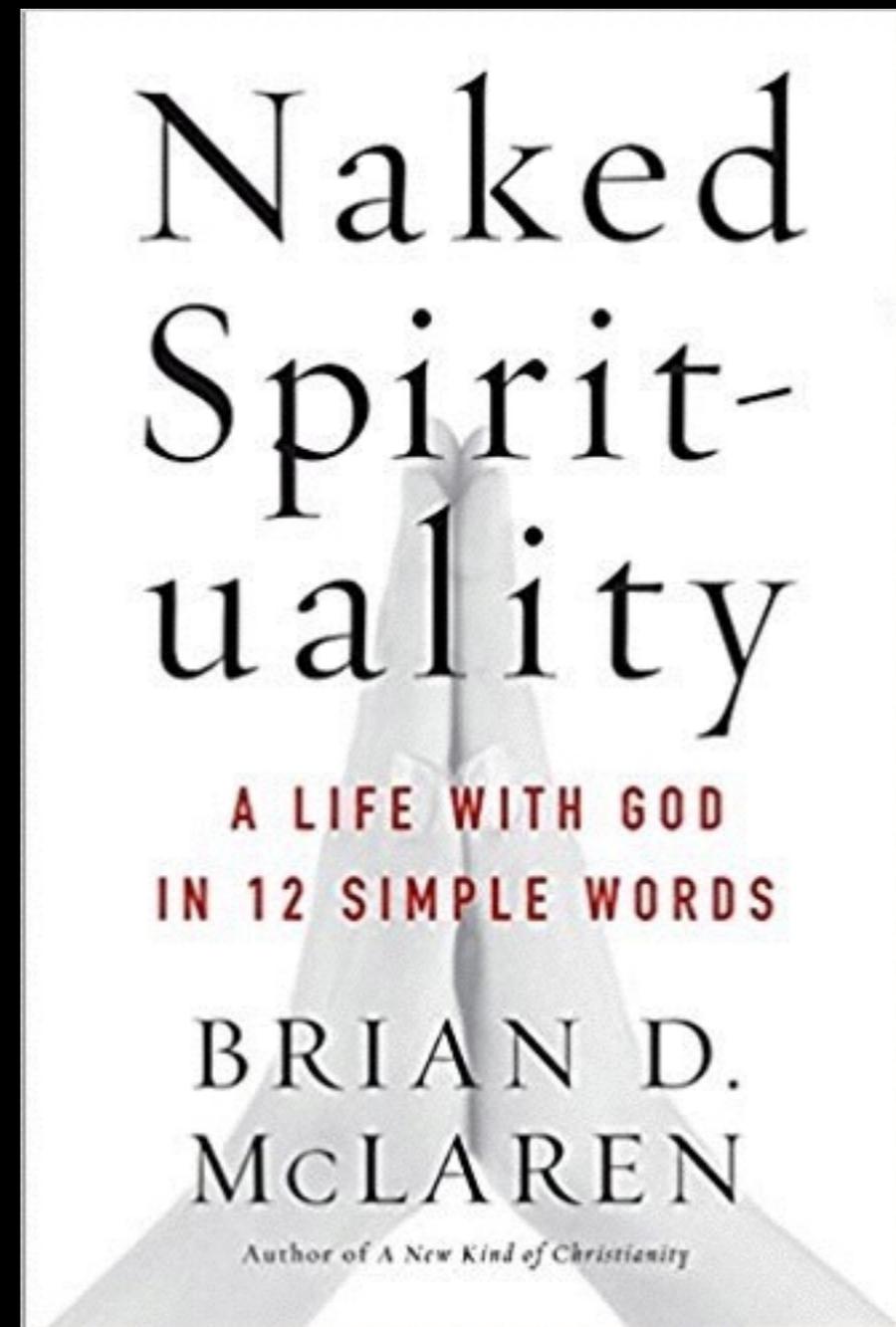
2007

A reviewer:

McLaren has no ecclesiology. (view of the church)



2008



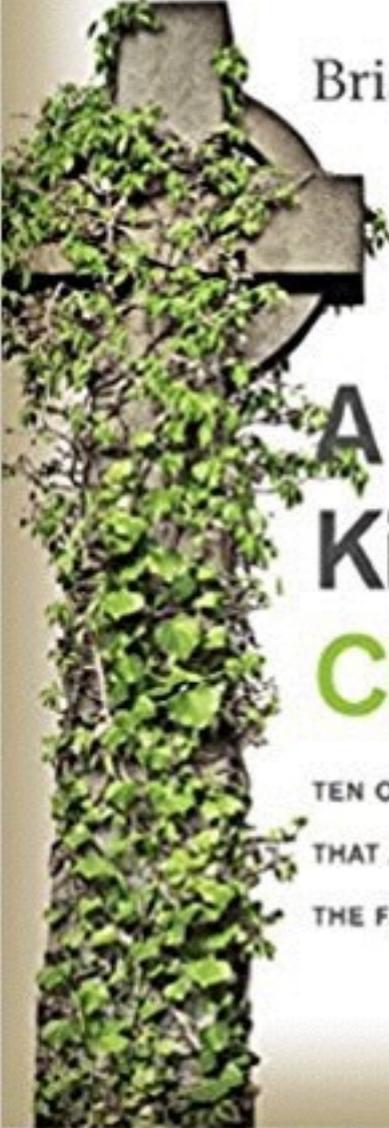
2011

A reader:

Can you help people who are new to your work to catch up?

"[McLaren] is packaging spiritual dynamite and shipping it to cells of believers nationwide who are so restless with the bondage of 'church life' that they want to blow the roof off and start again."—*Read the Spirit*

Brian D. McLaren



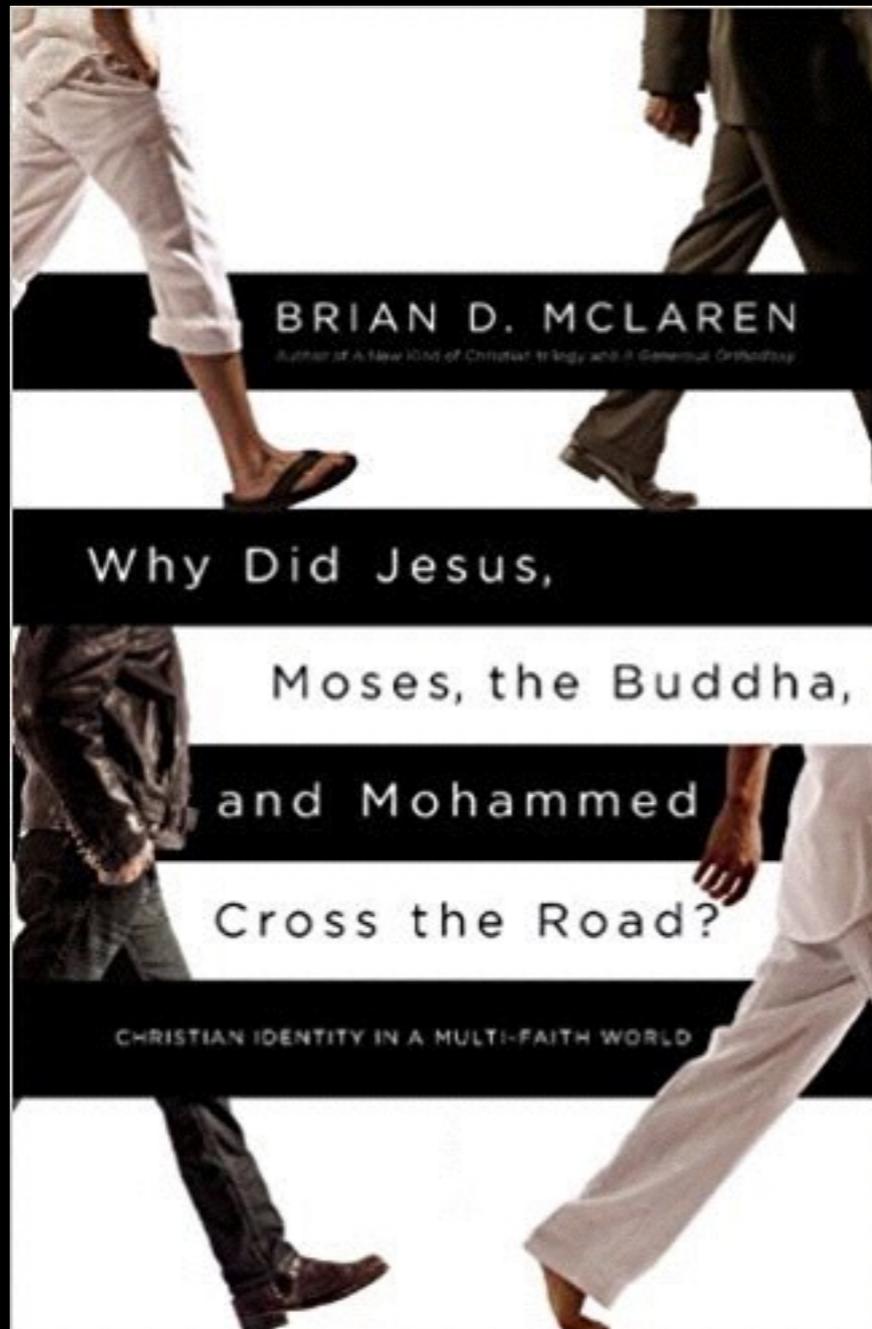
A New Kind of Christianity

TEN QUESTIONS
THAT ARE TRANSFORMING
THE FAITH

2010

many readers:

what about other religions? is there a way to stay
Christian without being a religious bigot?



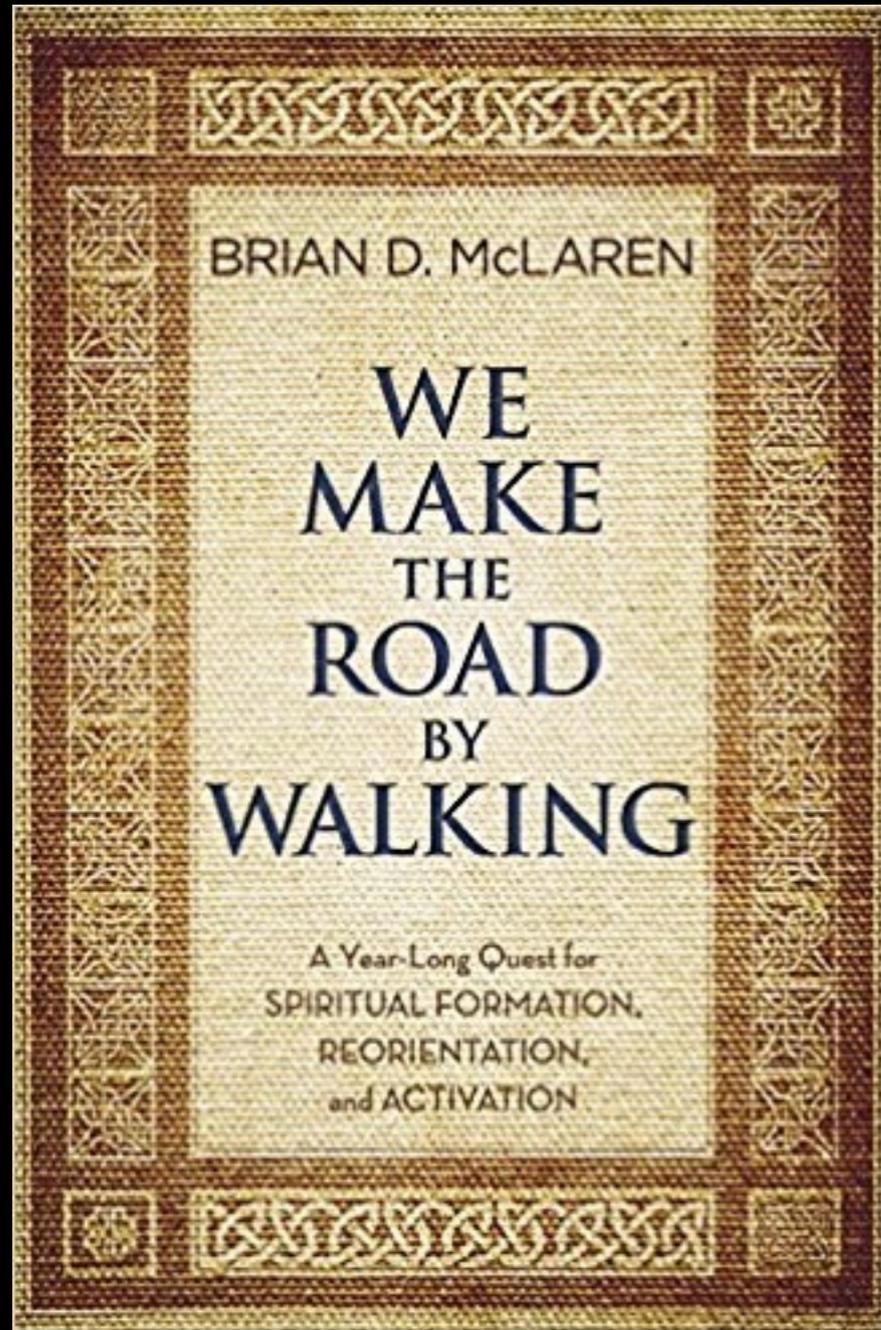
2013

Many readers:

We can't find a church that is interested in a new kind of Christianity.

Many pastors:

We need help teaching people a new kind of Christianity.



2015

Many readers:

Are there any signs of a positive movement we can be part of?

*"PROVOCATIVE AND POWERFUL"
NICHOLAS KRISTOF, NEW YORK TIMES*



THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MIGRATION

**HOW THE WORLD'S
LARGEST RELIGION IS
SEEKING A BETTER
WAY TO BE CHRISTIAN**

BRIAN D. McLAREN

*AUTHOR OF WHEN GOD BEGINS TO THINK
AND A GENERAL THEORY*

2016

1. Writing has been part of my discovery process - an opportunity to be a scout entering new territory.

What is your quest - your discovery process - your new territory?

2. Each writer forges his/her own writing method and habits.

Mine: Start with a problem or question.

Write fast and furiously.

Edit lightly until first draft is done.

Trust my instincts.

Test material in speaking and blogging.

Be willing to throw out a lot and start over repeatedly.

*"PROVOCATIVE AND POWERFUL"
NICHOLAS KRISTOF, NEW YORK TIMES*



**THE GREAT
SPIRITUAL MIGRATION**

**HOW THE WORLD'S
LARGEST RELIGION IS
SEEKING A BETTER
WAY TO BE CHRISTIAN**

BRIAN D. McLAREN

*AUTHOR OF THE NEW ATHEISM OF CHRISTIANITY
AND A GENERAL APPEAL*

I wrote about 240,000 words to end up with 60,000 words.

I changed title/thrust of book 3 times.

I ended up combining 3 books into one.

2. Each writer forges his/her own writing method and habits.

What methods and habits best work for you?

3. I've had to adjust
... as I've changed, my audience has changed, and the
publishing industry has changed.

I've changed.

My writing changed my life before it changed anybody else's.

I tried out new ideas and found many stood the test.

They became the basis for new explorations.

I scouted new territory - and found the new territory to be a
“promised land”

My audience has changed.

Losses and gains ...

Change among loyal readers ...

A note about religious audiences and “prophetic” messages:

Center to leading edge

Leading edge to ledge

Margins to marginalized

Jesus in his hometown (Luke 4)

The publishing industry has changed.
“People are reading more than they ever have before,
but it’s free on the internet. People will only pay to read a
book that promises to help them with a significant felt
problem or need.” - An editor

3. I've had to adjust as I've changed, my audience has changed, and the publishing industry has changed.

How can you become realistic about the real world of publishing today?

4. The world needs people who are willing to pay the price to create spaces for people to grow.

A book (or poem, song, script, or screenplay) as a “transporter” -

People normally live in stages.

But they can experience temporary states the signal to them the existence of stages they are incapable of experiencing long-term.

When they return to their normal stage, they now have a vision, a memory, a longing for a new stage, a new way of life ... to which they will aspire.

Writing is a tunnel through the rock of the status quo into
the future.

4. The world needs people who are willing to pay the price to create spaces for people to grow.

What states, stages, or spaces have you discovered to which you want to invite, entice, introduce, and transport others?

writing for your life (2)

writing for a living (\$) differs greatly from
writing for your life

your moral life
your spiritual life
your intellectual life
your life of compassion and solidarity

writing for others' lives

to save the lives of the vulnerable
the misunderstood
the scapegoated
the marginalized
the sick, imprisoned, hungry, homeless
the orphan, widow, alien, stranger
the other, outsider, outcast, and enemy

what i've learned in these strange times:

people can't see what they can't see.

people can't see what they can't see ...
because of 8 built-in biases we all share.

writers who are writing to save lives and liberate the
oppressed need to steer their messages around these
biases ...

“wise as serpents” (finding the tiniest opening)
“innocent as doves” (honest, true, genuine, nonviolent)

8 biases or barriers to your message
of hope, transformation, and good news of great joy

Confirmation Bias

Our story or system excludes what doesn't fit.

Complexity Bias

We prefer a simple myth to a complex truth.

Community Bias

It's almost impossible to see what our community doesn't see.
(Belonging/Social Identity & Desirability/Mimetic Theory)

Complementarity Bias

If you are hostile to my ideas, I'll be hostile to yours -
and vice versa.

(Complementarity Theory in Social Psychology)

Competency Bias

We don't know how little (or much) we know,
because we don't know how much (or little) others know.
(Dunning-Kruger Hypothesis)

Consciousness Bias

Some things simply can't be seen from where I am right now.
(But I can make short leaps to a state beyond my stage.)
(Integral Theory, Human/Moral Development Theory)

Complacency Bias

I can't handle that much pain.
(Psychic Numbing)

conservative/liberal bias

My political leanings help me see some things and miss others.

nurturing fairness & kindness!

or

strictly enforcing purity, loyalty, liberty, & tradition!

moral foundations theory

Lakoff's strict father vs. nurturing parent

confirmation
complexity
community
complementarity
competency
consciousness
complacency
conservative/liberal

people can't see what they can't see.

?

“people can’t see what they can’t see”
isn’t the whole truth.

*people can't see what they can't see
until someone helps them see it.*

here's how Jesus helped (not forced)
people to see more.

Confirmation Bias

Jesus surprised and “abducted” people - through immersive or imaginative experiences: a field trip, unexpected guest, or powerful personal story.

Jesus changed the world by telling a bigger, better framing story.

Complexity Bias

Jesus simply, briefly, confidently made and repeated his message.

He saved the details until people asked for it - as confirmation.

Community Bias

Jesus created a welcoming, more desirable community
with a clear onramp to his movement

Complementarity Bias

Jesus flipped the script - “Do unto others” not as they do to you, but as you would have them do to you.

Competency Bias

Jesus helped people admit they have a lot to learn ... and built their confidence that they'll enjoy learning and succeed at it.

Consciousness Bias

Jesus introduced people to immersive and “transcendent experiences” (states) and offered practices for growth in and through stages

complacency bias

Jesus would tell one story with feeling & provide one simple step within their current capacity.

not “how can I heal more people,” but
“how can we deploy more healers?”

conservative/liberal bias

Jesus started with compassion & fairness

and employed

Purity vs. Degradation, In-Group Loyalty vs. Betrayal,
Liberty vs. Oppression, Tradition vs. Rebellion

*people can't see what they can't see until
someone helps them see it.*

Jesus helped others to see more.

And so can we.

Checklist

1. Jesus “abducted” his audience through imagination, surprise, unexpected vulnerability, risky boldness. (confirmation)
2. Jesus made 1, 2, or 3 memorable, simple points and trimmed away everything else. (complexity)
3. Jesus presented himself and his group as welcoming of seekers and pleasant to be around. (community)
4. Jesus showed script-flipping respect, kindness, patience and curiosity to those he hoped to influence. (complementarity)
5. Jesus celebrated people’s ability to change their minds & learn. (competency)
6. Jesus helped people experience a “state” that could later become a “stage.” (consciousness)
7. Jesus gave people one thing to do right now about one problem. (complacency)
8. Jesus led with compassion and fairness, but also appealed to purity, loyalty, liberty, and tradition.

